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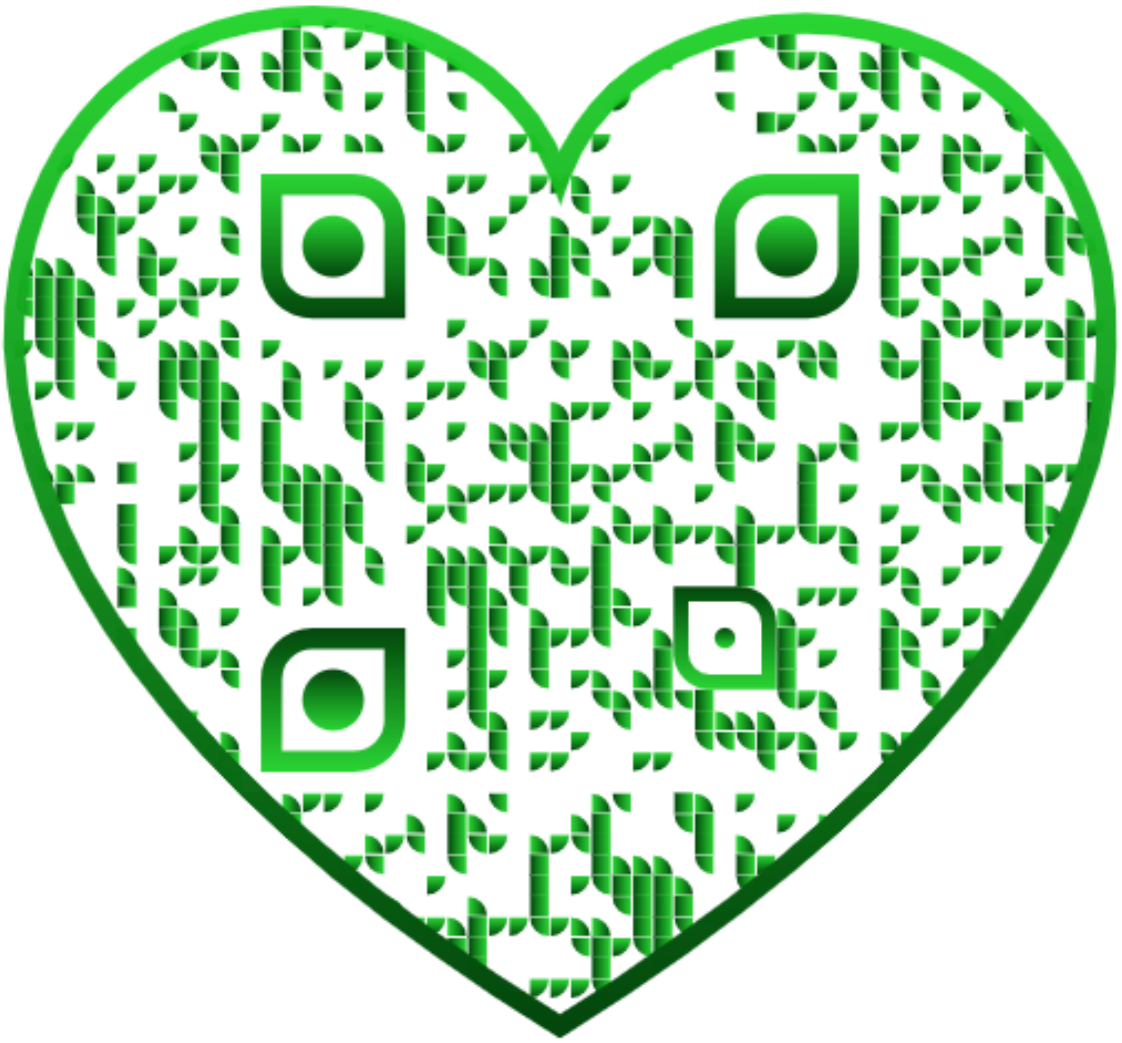

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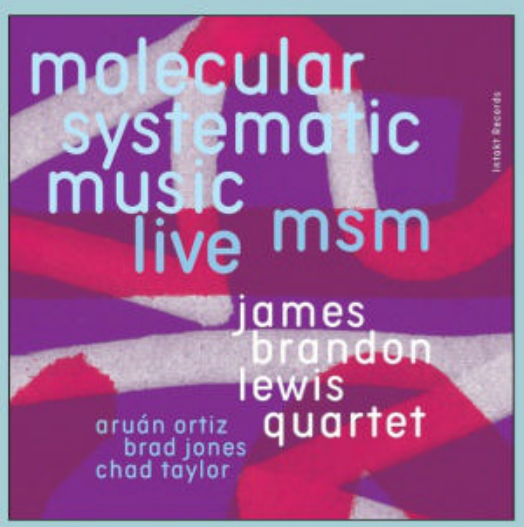

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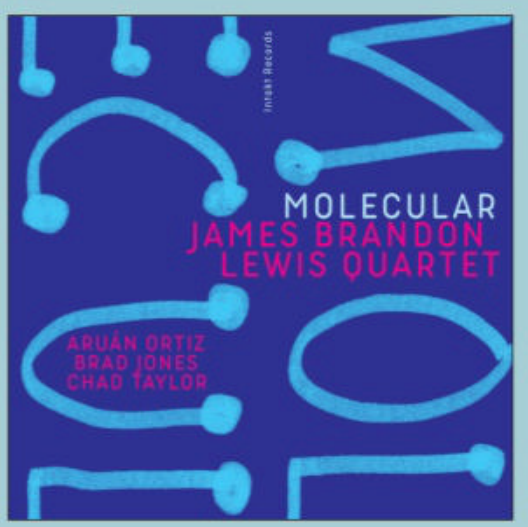

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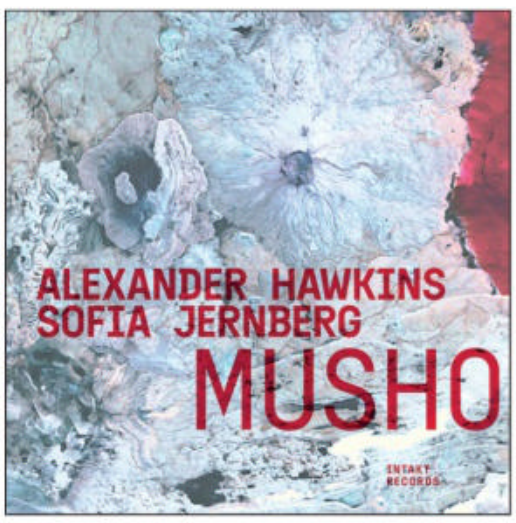

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Photo: Courtesy of the Louis Armstrong House Museum

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News

By Mike Flynn, Kevin Whitlock and Jon Newey

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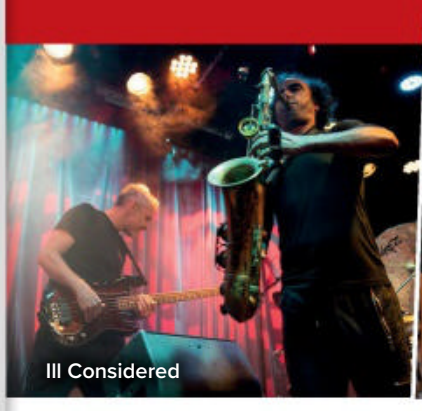
Ill Considered

Laura Impallomeni

Manu Katché

Meshell Ndegeocello

Manu Katché, Jazz in the Round, Next Gen Jazz and others complete Love Supreme 2024 line-up

The full line-up to this year's Love Supreme Jazz Festival has been confirmed, with many additional acts performing across the event's numerous stages. Running from Friday 5 to Sunday 7 July at Glynde Place, East Sussex, this year the festival features more bands on its opening night to cater for the many thousands of campers who arrive early for a full festival weekend.

Friday now sees the South Downs stage host Grammy-winning bassist/singer Meshell Ndegeocello between sets from soulful newcomer Jordan Mackampa and recent Glastonbury headliner, vocalist Mahalia. And the Supreme Standards stage gets going early too with Friday sets from talented Portuguese singer/guitarist Raquel Martins; bass guitar-and-beats man Rudi Creswick; singer Konyikeh; sax-player-of-the-moment James Brandon Lewis (see this month's feature on page 24); all ahead of late night DJ sets from Deptford Northern Soul Club and Russ Dewbury.

The long-running Jazz In The Round stage (much like its monthly events in London's Marylebone) showcases emerging and established acts with a busy Friday line-up including young pianist Luke Bacchus' mix of sounds from his Guyanese and Caribbean heritage; a bonus second set from James Brandon Lewis; plus drummer Rod Youngs topping this bill with his Max Roach Tribute project. The Saturday JITR line-up includes last month's 'Taking Off' saxophonist Maddy Coombs and her Quartet with pianist Sultan Stevenson on keys; punky-jazz-electronica from Ill Considered, the trio of saxophonist Idris Rahman, drummer Emre Ramazanoglu and bassist Liran Donin; and a show from Baque Luar, the London-based collective who unite around their love of Brazilian and Afro-Brazilian roots music.

As always, the New Generation stage showcases lots of new talent that's bubbling under from the Brighton, South Coast and London scenes. Running from Friday night and across the weekend names to look out for include Afro-Latin group Pollito Boogaloo (Friday); the hard-swinging QOW Trio (Saturday), the progressive sextet Cityscape Ensemble; saxophonist Alex Bondonno's Water From an Ancient Well, and Latin-influenced trombonist Laura Impallomeni (Sunday).

Further 'fringe' performances can be found on the Bands and Voices (BAV) stage which hosts poets, spoken word artists and more with London newcomers Faker Villain appearing on the Friday night with their raw improv and effects infused drums, bass and sax/bass clarinet line-up.

A new addition to the South Downs stage's Saturday shows is jazz solo artist and former Sting/Peter Gabriel session drummer Manu Katché, who brings his hard-grooving contemporary sounds to Love Supreme for the first time. Katché joins those names already announced in *Jazzwise* and include Roni Kaspi; Alicia and Michael Olatuja; Dhafer Youssef; Andrew McCormack Group featuring Kyle Eastwood; Alice Russell; Rosie Frater-Taylor; Jacqui Dankworth; Cécile McLorin Salvant; Fergus McCreadie; Hiromi's Sonicwonder Band; Johnathan Blake; Christian McBride and this issue's cover star, jazz-rock drum icon Billy Cobham with his Spectrum 50 Band.

Further headliners include US funk outfit Kool & The Gang, vocalist Joss Stone, and iconic singer Chaka Khan who celebrates 50 years in music with a closing Sunday night headline slot. *Jazzwise* is festival media partner. **More at www.lovesupremefestival.com**

Neil Cowley Trio return with new album *Entity*

Pianist Neil Cowley has confirmed the return of his widely acclaimed Trio – with bassist Rex Horan and drummer Evan Jenkins – after a seven year hiatus working as a solo artist exploring a highly personal electro-acoustic soundworld. They released their first single 'Adam Alphabet' on 5 June – that's taken from their forthcoming (20 September) album *Entity* – while the band are also confirmed for a headline show at Earth, Hackney on 19 November as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival.

Entity sees the trio pick up where they left off, with some of the band's earlier kinetic jazz-rock riffing replaced with a more emotive set of songs, notably derived from a purely acoustic set-up. Commenting on the album the pianist says: "In contrast to the machines we are slave to, we're presenting something that is unmistakably human; communal, supportive, flexible, reactive, instantaneous and flawed; and perhaps, when we are at our most elevated and selfless, what you might call an entity!" **For more info visit www.neilcowleymusic.com**

Milton Nascimento and Esperanza Spalding to release Brazilian jazz album with all-star line-up

Brazilian vocal legend Milton Nascimento and multi-award winning bassist/singer Esperanza Spalding are set to release a new album, *Milton + esperanza*, on 9 August on Concord Records.

It's Spalding's first major album since her recent more experimental releases (2018's *12 Little Spells* and 2021's *Songwrights Apothecary Lab*). Concord claims it also finally realises the duo's creative chemistry that was first heard on 'Apple Blossom' on Spalding's breakthrough 2010 album *Chamber Music Society*.

The new album features 16 tracks that celebrate and reimagine five of Nascimento's best-loved classics, plus newly written originals by Spalding, alongside interpretations of The Beatles' 'A Day In The Life' and Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song' among other works exploring the music of Brazil and beyond.

Guest appearances include Paul Simon, Dianne Reeves, Lianne La Havas, Maria Gadú, Tim Bernardes, Carolina Shorter, Shabaka Hutchings and others. Recorded throughout 2023 the album is produced, arranged and executive produced by Spalding. Though some work was done in the US, much of the recording took place in Rio and features Spalding's core band of Matthew Stevens (guitar), Justin Tyson and Eric Doob (drums), Leo Genovese (piano), Corey D King (vocals, synths), and several Brazilian musicians, including Orquestra Ouro Preto, percussionists Kainã Do Jêje and Robertinho Silva, and Lula Galvão and Guinga on guitar.

For more info visit www.found.ee/Milton-esperanza

Editor's Note

Polling day is just over a couple of weeks away from when this issue goes on sale and putting aside all the (exhausting) hyperbole for one moment, this election offers a chance for a fresh start for the arts in the UK. After 12 Tory Culture Secretaries in 14 years, the arts have been more of a political football, used for fighting culture wars, rather than rightly valued as a source of pride and 'soft power' capable of lifting the spirits, enhancing and bringing pleasure to so many people's lives while generating billions of pounds in revenue and thousands of jobs.

Yet, as documented in the *Guardian* on 15 March, Kier Starmer's visit to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama the day before provided that rarest of things from a politician: a passionate speech about their unequivocal support for the arts and creative industries. Starmer also refreshingly revealed he played the flute in his childhood, but went further about the transformational power of the arts, saying: "Everyone here will know that feeling. Of losing yourself, and finding something new in that space art creates. These encounters with art and culture change us for ever. They certainly changed me for ever."

We know that if Labour are elected they have a mountain to climb in terms of turning round the many wrongs of the current government, including the reduction of music provision in many schools; post-Brexit access to Europe for touring musicians; funding support for grassroots venues around the country and so much more – but for culture, and by extension music, to be valued for just how positively access to it improves the lives of so many, no matter their background, is all the more reason to get out and vote for change. The time is now! **Mike Flynn, Editor; Jon Newey, Editor in Chief, *Jazzwise***

New online global jazz radio platform One Jazz launched by broadcasters Chris Philips and Jez Nelson

A new 24/7 global online jazz radio platform, One Jazz, has been launched by lifelong friends and award-winning jazz radio stalwarts Chris Philips and Jez Nelson. The station features a wide range of programmes, presented by leading broadcasters, musicians and journalists on what is a not-for-profit, volunteer-led organisation.

Confirmed presenters (and shows in quotes) include Paul Bradshaw (*Straight No Chaser*), Götz Bühler (JazzAhead! from Germany), Marco Cafolla (Mama Terra), Nicola Conte (from Italy), Anthony Dean-Harris ('The Lineup' from USA), Ruth Fisher ('Four Corners'), Mike Flynn (*Jazzwise* 'Editor's Choice'), Haseeb Iqbal, Mari (Gondwana Records' 'Our World Session'), Kasia Konstance (Heads Up), Kyri ('Other Ways Of Being'), Kevin Le Gendre ('Now's The Time'), Gerry Lyseight ('Near Enough For Jazz'), Toshio Matsuura ('Tokyo Moon' from Japan), Jez Nelson, Matti Nives (We Jazz from Finland), Chris Philips, Debra Richards ('The Fuse'), Orphy Robinson ('The Vibes Describes'), Rouhangeze ('SoundShift'), Darrel Sheinman ('Gearbox Playback Sessions'), Tomorrow's Warriors, Beatrice Venturini (Montreux Jazz Festival – 'Then & Now'), Don Was ('Blue Note First Look') and the Audio Gold 'Jazz Mixtape'.

"Even in the short time since the news of One Jazz broke we've had a fantastic response from jazz professionals and jazz lovers around the world," comments Nelson. "Jazz fans are hungry for a place they can call their own, where they know they're guaranteed to hear great music whenever they tune in. The shows that our hosts are delivering are already opening my ears – I'm discovering brilliant new music from Germany, Finland, Japan... there's so much superb unheard stuff out there!"

To listen live visit www.onejazz.net

Jez Nelson (left) and Chris Philips (right) - Photo by Steve Cropper

Debra Richards

Don Was

Rouhangeze

Glasgow and Edinburgh Jazz Festival line-ups get Scotland swinging

With its native jazz scene currently enjoying a resurgence, Scotland's two major summer jazz festivals have announced their 2024 line-ups.

First up is **Glasgow Jazz Festival** which returns from 19 to 23 June, with more than 20 events across the city. Performances include the return of US sax great Bobby Watson, who is back at the festival for the first time in 30 years with his Quartet, while newer names to look out for include spiritual jazzers Mama Terra who salute Herbie Hancock's jazz-funk classic *Head Hunters*; vocalist kitti delves into her Caledonian Songbook, paying homage to songs in the Scots tradition; Winner of 2023 BBC Radio Scotland Young Jazz Musician of the Year, pianist Ben Shankland also performs; and the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra reunite with vibes virtuoso Orphy Robinson. Further names appearing include Scots guitar hero Jim Mullen and his Trio; former Average White Band guitarist/singer Hamish Stuart; while the Kyoto Jazz Massive blend Japanese and French influences into a harmonious fusion. Acclaimed pianist Fergus McCreadie plays music from his latest album *Stream*, and there's a bombastic show BLACKSABBATHMODE that unites nu-jazz duo BIGHEADMODE and singer Plumm for a jazzified take on the songs of Black Sabbath.

This is followed by the **Edinburgh Jazz & Blues Festival**, which returns to the Scottish capital from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 July with the programme featuring jazz and blues talent from all corners of the globe, with over 120 events taking place around the city.

Chief among the names announced are American trumpeter Theo Croker; singer Niki King; Scottish saxophonist Tommy Smith; and bassist/vocalist Nik West. Fergus McCreadie presents two projects, one of which is a Scottish premiere. There's also a specially-convened project from award-winning trumpeter Laura Jurd whose 'From Folk To Freedom' features a multi-talented band featuring Norman Willmore, Ruth Goller, Chris Batchelor, Simone Seales, Christos Stylianidies and Glasshopper.

This year's international showcase introduces some exciting new names to Scotland for the first time. Curated in association with Veronika Friedlová of Mladí ladí jazz festival, as part of the Year of Czech Music, and organised in collaboration with the Czech Centre, there will be performances by emerging Czech jazz acts such as Endemit, Kristina Barta Trio, Nela Dusová, Treetop, Trio Henya, and Undo Redo.

There's also a Scottish Jazz Expo, presenting new music and commissions from artists such as Helena Kay, kitti, Colin Steele and Anoushka Nanguy and newcomers Rosalind Orr, Simon Herberholz, and Kimberley Tessa.

For the full Glasgow Jazz Festival line-up visit www.jazzfest.co.uk; and for the full Edinburgh programme visit ejbf.co.uk

BACK IN THE DAY...

Variously labelled as 'The Battle of Beaulieu' and 'Beatnik Horror' by the tabloids, and 'Modern Wreck & Roll to the Beat of a Jazz Drum' by the more inventive subs at the *Bradford Telegraph*, the riot-strewn 1960 Beaulieu Jazz Festival, held at the New Forest stately home of Lord Montagu, was not only a forerunner of the National Jazz & Blues Festival, but also an early taste of the first teenage tribal culture wars, fought over music, clothes, lifestyle choices and race. These often-violent confrontations continued in the 1960s with mods and rockers' seaside battles, hippies being attacked by skinheads, the racist attacks at the Notting Hill carnival and the punks and Teddy Boy clashes of the late 1970s, all of which sent the establishment and their client media into a moral panic and hate tirade.

But who could have foretold the unexpected outcome when this jolly-looking Beaulieu Jazz advert ran in *Melody Maker's* 23 July 1960 issue – with its unwritten promise of picnics on the lawns, light ale, cider and snogging – that a week later the stage would be on fire, lighting scaffold toppled and local Teds and 'Trad Yobs' attacking peace-loving Beatniks and modern jazz fans as they stormed the stage to cheer on Acker Bilk and later berate John Dankworth? Ambulances, police and fire engines were called, the BBC had equipment go missing, a piano was destroyed, and some of George Melly's clothes were found up a tree. Meanwhile, the 7 August issue of *The People* newspaper attempted to blame the whole thing on the wayward influence of Beat poets, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso and William Burroughs under the header 'Their Cult of Despair Is Driving The Teenagers To Violence'... Hmmm! **Jon Newey**

FIFTH
BEAULIEU JAZZ FESTIVAL
30th & 31st JULY · 1st AUGUST 1960
7.30 - MIDNIGHT
ON THE LAWNS OF PALACE HOUSE, BEAULIEU
IN THE HEART OF THE NEW FOREST
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introduced by ALAN DELL
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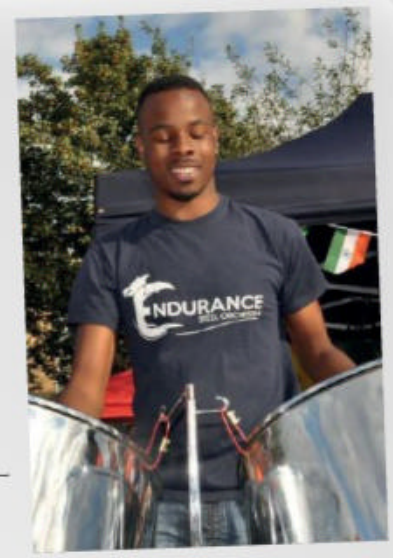
FUTURE MOVERS

HIGHLIGHTING SERIOUS TALENT BUBBLING UNDER THE RADAR....



NAME: Marlon Hibbert
INSTRUMENTS: Steel pan & vocals

EXPERIENCE AND INFLUENCES: Marlon Hibbert began playing the steel pan at age 12 while attending Stanley Tech for Boys (now Harris Academy South Norwood). Over the years he has collaborated with artists such as Zara McFarlane and Lewis Daniel, and has been involved with Kinetika Bloco, performing alongside Mark Kavuma and Ruben Fox. Currently, he can be seen playing with both Luke Baccus and Lox.

THIS FUTURE MOVER SAYS: "My aim is to make my instrument an extension of me, my emotions in the moment and the message I want to put across. I'm working toward releasing a track later this year and putting on my first show with Jazz re:freshed in August. Music has been the cornerstone of my life, from childhood to now, steelpan along with its community has always been by my side. I would love to work with Hiromi or Stevie Wonder one day."

See Marlon Hibbert play Ronnie Scott's Future Movers Late Shows on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 July led by Phil Meadows (alto sax) and featuring Jude Lane (piano), Benjamin Crane (bass), Jonah Evans (drums). More info at www.ronniescotts.co.uk

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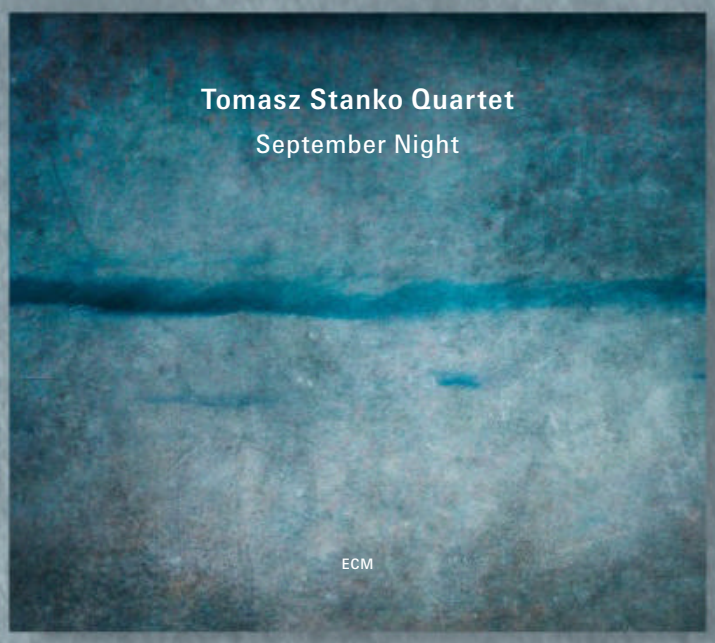
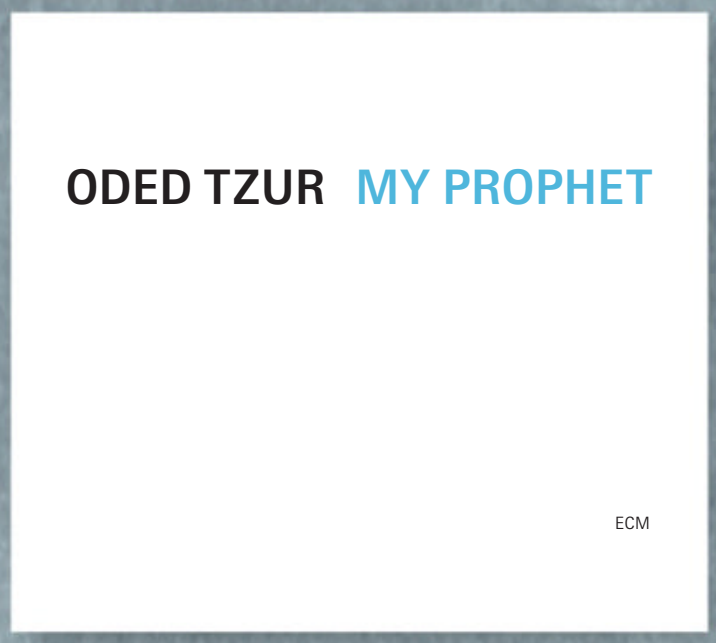


Tomasz Stanko Quartet
September Night

Tomasz Stanko trumpet
Marcin Wasilewski piano
Slawomir Kurkiewicz double bass
Michal Miskiewicz drums

ECM 2650 CD/LP



Oded Tzur
My Prophet

Oded Tzur tenor saxophone
Nitai Hershkovits piano
Petros Klampanis double bass
Cyrano Almeida drums

ECM 2821 CD/LP

Norma Winstone / Kit Downes
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Norma Winstone voice
Kit Downes piano

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Live in Munich

Jordina Millà piano
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ECM 2827 CD

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The singer selects the five albums she can't live without

1 ***Look To The Rainbow: Live In Berlin*** **by Al Jarreau (1977)**
"The album *Look To The Rainbow* had a huge impact on me as a young person. It is so full of joy and the musicians are all so utterly brilliant. The whole album, recorded live in Berlin, is intoxicating. I love the energy of the record and Jarreau's virtuosic performances shine - so full of hope and stunning musicianship all round. I felt heartbroken when he died. The end of an era."

2 ***Both Sides Now*** **by Joni Mitchell (2000)**
"A masterclass in vocal storytelling. Mitchell does a lot of the old "standards" plus some of her own songs which have become standards of today, all with truly breathtaking arrangements by Vince Mendoza. The band is unbelievably wonderful and the album was recorded in London [at Air Studios] with many of the greatest British musicians onboard. Joni is a master storyteller and these songs simply come alive with her fearless interpretations, drawing on her life experience. The song 'Both Sides Now' moves me every time I listen to this version, recorded in the autumn of her years."

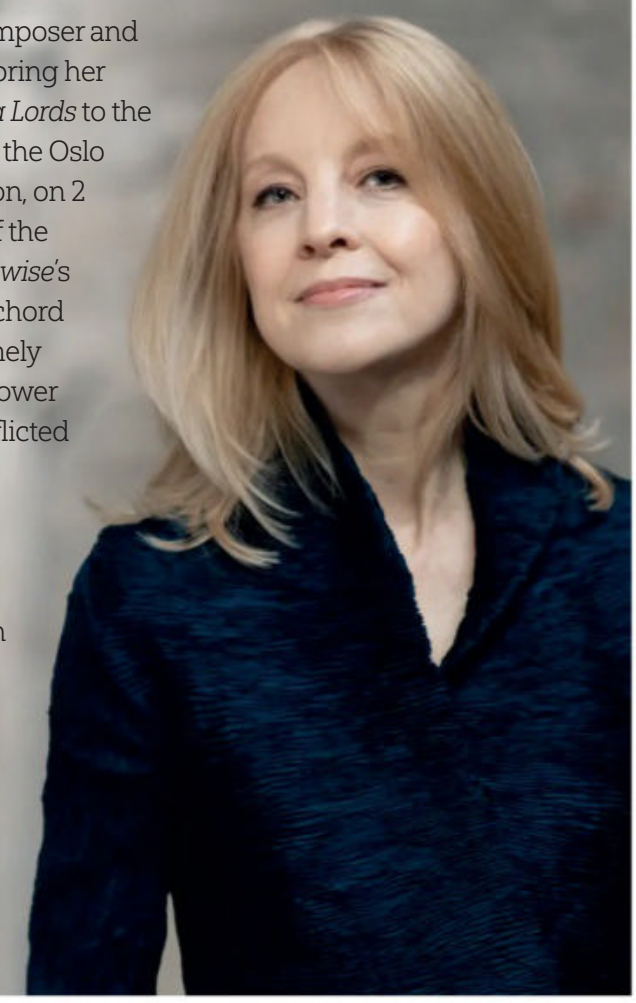
3 ***Nancy Wilson and Cannonball Adderley*** **by Nancy Wilson and Cannonball Adderley (1962)**
"This is one of my all-time favourite vocal and instrumental albums. Wilson and Adderley quite obviously appreciate each other and you can hear this throughout their musical collaboration here. Wilson's vocal control, phrasing and her ability to draw on many different vocal colours is extraordinary. Cannonball Adderley is utterly thrilling. The set is shared with songs and instrumentals. Pure joy."

4 ***Wordsongs*** **by Cleo Laine and John Dankworth (1986)**
"I grew up listening to this album over and over. I studied acting at the Guildhall and listening to all these genius Shakespeare settings by my father was an early "way in" to Shakespeare's poetry. Impeccably sung by my brilliant mum (who will be 97 this year!). I've always adored this record. I believe it is a master work. A perfect collaboration between two brilliant musical minds and one of the greatest poets to grace this planet."

5 ***Southbound*** **by Charlie Wood (1996)**
"This record introduced me to Charlie's music. I was knocked sideways on first hearing it. He is a truly gifted and intelligent songwriter from Memphis, with a charismatic voice. He is also a virtuosic exponent of the Hammond organ. (I covered his 'Lucky Charm' on my album *As The Sun Shines Down On Me*) The arrangements for horn section by Tom Clary are quite brilliant and Charlie's voice is raw and utterly beautiful."

Jacqui Dankworth performs at Love Supreme Jazz Festival on Sunday 7 July

Maria Schneider and Oslo Jazz Ensemble bring *Data Lords* to the Barbican in '25



The Grammy Award-winning jazz composer and bandleader Maria Schneider is set to bring her critically- acclaimed 2020 album *Data Lords* to the UK for the first time for a concert with the Oslo Jazz Ensemble at the Barbican, London, on 2 March 2025. Released in the depths of the Covid pandemic, the album won *Jazzwise*'s 2020 Album of the Year, and struck a chord with critics across the board for its timely take on the dangers of big data and power of tech companies; as well as the conflicted relationships between the digital and natural worlds.

At the Barbican in March 2025, Schneider will be performing with the 19-piece Oslo Jazz Ensemble, with whom she has worked closely for the last 10 years, and who have become intuitive interpreters of her work. In addition, Schneider regular Thor-Ivar Lund will be on hand, acting as sound engineer.

For more info visit www.barbican.org.uk

65 YEARS AGO – John Dankworth

With British jazz these days even gaining respect in the States, it's hard to remember when European musicians mainly aspired to rather lacklustre imitations of their favourite Americans. It takes an effort, then, to appreciate the achievement of John Dankworth on his band's only US tour, including gigs alongside Louis Armstrong's All-Stars and an appearance at Birdland, while on 3 July 1959 their bus pulled into the Newport Jazz Festival (photographer Burt Goldblatt witnessed the road manager calling out "Chaps! Chaps! Don't wander off!").

Their set was preserved on a long-forgotten LP, *London To Newport* (released in the US as *Bundle From Britain*, and briefly reissued on CD as *Britain's Ambassador Of Jazz*). Repertoire is straight-ahead, with an old Basie tune, three Ellington-related ones, and three originals in the same vein. Dankworth's writing for his slightly unusual line-up (10 brass players including tuba, but only three reeds) is gratifyingly functional, and his solos and those of tenorman Danny Moss are impressive. Other personnel heard include Dickie Hawdon (later of Leeds College fame), trombonist Laurie Monk (subsequent BBC music producer) and pianist Dave Lee (co-founder of Jazz FM).

JD obviously chose his sidemen well and, 65 years after this was first heard on Voice Of America (with Willis Conover doing the on-stage announcements), almost the best thing is the contribution of Kenny Clare who, in the 1960s, became half of the drum duo piloting the Kenny Clarke-Francy Boland ensemble. The relaxation of the whole performance is evidence that this was very much a 'working band', a status harder to maintain in the following decade, when Dankworth began to earn better money writing film scores and TV theme tunes. **Brian Priestley**

HARKEN!

THREEWAY
WITH SPECIAL GUEST JOHN ETHERIDGE

Released on CD (JCCD120) and digital download

Harken! **features eleven original compositions written by the trio and John Etheridge as well as an interpretation of Joni Mitchell's Black Crow. Four of the compositions make up *The Hark Suite* by Crosland and inspiration for the title of the album. *"Sedbergh School in Cumbria, where I studied, and where I still enjoy a musical connection, is celebrating its Quincentenary next year. Hark is an acronym for the four core values which encompass life at the school: Humility, Ambition, Resilience, and Kindness."***

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David Sanborn: 30/07/1945 – 12/05/2024

Despite having one of the most immediately recognisable alto saxophone sounds in jazz, David Sanborn always played down the idea of having a 'signature sound'. Initially influenced by Hank Crawford, Sanborn also studied with tenorist JR Monterose, but was equally influenced by David 'Fathead' Newman, and the phrasing and attack of fellow altoist Phil Woods.

Initially taking up the saxophone after an attack of polio, he quickly became stunningly proficient. By his mid-teens he was playing with Albert King, and at the age of 22 he joined the Butterfield Blues Band and played the legendary Woodstock festival.

Photo: Tim Dickeson

But blues (and soul) were not his only interests. Born in Florida, with a childhood in Kirkwood Missouri, he settled in St Louis, and regarded that as his home city. There he was drawn into the avant-garde jazz scene, with Lester Bowie, Roscoe Mitchell and Henry Threadgill. He was to acknowledge Lester as a major influence on his 1991 album *Upfront*, and then played on Tim Berne's tribute to Hemphill, *Diminutive Mysteries*, a couple of years later.

Sanborn's interests spanned a huge breadth of music, way beyond simply 'smooth jazz' or 'easy listening'. When he first came to New York in the early 1970s, alongside the Butterfield band, he played with both Gil Evans and David Bowie, as well as Stevie Wonder. In 1975, he joined the Brecker Brothers, recalling, "that's how I made a living", while launching his own career. At that time Mo Ostin at Warner Brothers was signing musicians who straddled jazz, rock, and blues. He had recently brought in Miroslav Vitous and Al Jarreau, and at the suggestion of the Butterfield Blues Band's producer John Court, took on Sanborn for his 1975 debut album as a leader, *Takin' Off*. Then, amid a variety of freelance work, Sanborn started touring his own bands, forging a long-term relationship with Marcus Miller as both bassist and producer.

Takin' Off was the first of 25 albums (including six Grammy winners) to appear under his own name, including *Hideaway* (on which he also played Fender Rhodes), the acoustic sessions on *Another Hand* (on Elektra Musician), the collaboration with Johnny Mandel's string orchestra on *Pearls*, the nods to South African jazz on *Closer* (on Verve), and an affectionate look back to Gil Evans on the Decca album *Here and Gone* from 2008, on which his long-term associate Gil Goldstein reworked Evans' chart for 'St Louis Blues' from *New Bottle Old Wine*.

He visited Britain often, including his fine 2011 London Jazz Festival trio show, with organist Joey De Francesco, playing music from *Only Everything*. (The title number was a dedication to his grand-daughter Genevieve.) The issued version, at the suggestion of producer Phil Ramone, was the first run-through, which has plenty of edge and excitement.

The last time I saw David on one of his last UK visits, was the 2019 Cheltenham Jazz Festival, where, as ever, he combined his signature sound with new ideas. Although he had already been diagnosed with cancer by then, it did not stop him working over Zoom during the pandemic, drawing on another element of his career as an admirable broadcaster, notably on his long-running syndicated PBS radio programme *The Jazz Show*. **Alyn Shipton**

Palle Danielsson: 15/10/1946 – 18/05/24

Bassist Palle Danielsson's playing first reached a broad international audience through his work with Keith Jarrett's European quartet. The fullness of his tone, particularly in the lower register, and his agility as a soloist across the whole range of the bass was also remarkable, as was his intuitive bond with drummer Jon Christensen. A track such as 'Spiral' from *Belonging* exemplifies his contribution, with its urgent underlying rhythm and its spiky bass solo mirroring the angularity of both Jarrett and Jan Garbarek's lines.

By the time he joined this group, in 1974, Palle had already worked alongside George Russell, played and recorded with Steve Kuhn, as well as singers Monica Zetterlund and Karin Krog. His interest in unusual source material and time signatures had also brought him into the band Rena Rama, co-led by pianist Bobo Stenson and saxophonist Lennart Åberg, for which Danielsson contributed a number of compositions including 'Circle Dance'.

Always preferring to be a sideman rather than a leader, Danielsson worked with a bewildering variety of musicians, from bebop veterans including Lee Konitz, to the European free jazz of Albert Mangelsdorff, or world-music of Collin Walcott. He was an effective contributor to Charles Lloyd's quartet in the late 1980s, especially on the album *Fish Out of Water*.

But there were long associations, notably his work with Rita Marcotulli, from the mid-1990s until 2015, but particularly with Stenson and saxophonist Joakim Milder. These three were in the Tomasz Stańko Sextet playing the music of Krzysztof Komeda for the album and tour of *Litania* in the late 1990s, and then in the quartet Sister Maj's Blouse along with drummer Fredrik Norén in the early 2000s, celebrating the work of the saxophonist/composer Börje Fredriksson.

British audiences heard Palle more often when he teamed up in a trio with pianist John Taylor, first with Peter Erskine on drums, and then with Martin France.

One of his recent collaborations was with the saxophonist Fredrik Nordström, on the 2019 album *Svensk Standard* (just a trio with drummer Fredrick Rundqvist). On that, Palle's lovely introduction to 'Ute blåser sommarvind' is as agile and beautiful as at any point in his long career.

Alyn Shipton

LP / CD / Digital

CHRISTIAN HOLM-SVENDSEN WITH DANIEL SOMMER & MARIUSZ PRAŚNIEWSKI: "TOTEM"
"a mature, cohesive ensemble sound... juxtaposes tranquility and space with energy and tenacity"

LP / CD / Digital

DAWDA JOBARTEH / STEFAN PASBORG "LIVE IN TURKU"
"an effusive, bristling live set...contains some genuine thrills!" (Jazzwise)

LP / CD / Digital

TOMASZ DĄBROWSKI & THE INDIVIDUAL BEINGS: "BETTER"
Ethereal ambient soundscapes, scorching solos and adventurous cacophonies of collective improvisation - "one of Europe's most versatile and curious players" (Downbeat Magazine)

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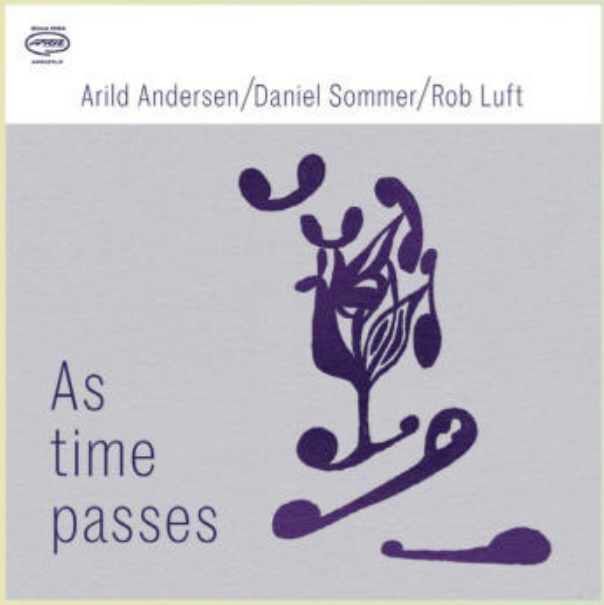
RASMUS SØRENSEN WITH ALEXANDER CLAFFY & KENDRICK SCOTT: "BALANCING ACT"
"Alongside Kendrick Scott and Alexander Claffy, Rasmus Sørensen stakes his claim as one-to-watch from this new generation of pianists"



LP / CD / Digital

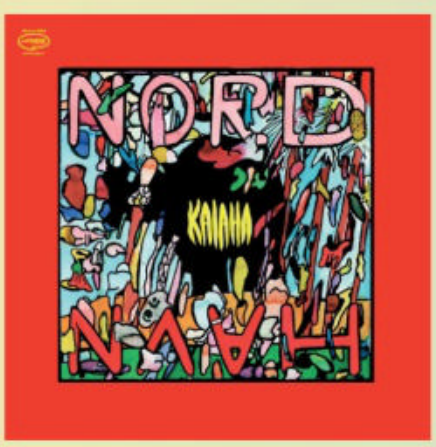
ARILD ANDERSEN / DANIEL SOMMER / ROB LUFT: "AS TIME PASSES"
"A superb, thoroughly compelling release of considerable musical and emotional range" (Michael Tucker, Jazz Journal)

LP / CD / Digital

LIS WESSBERG: "TWAIN WALKING"
Diving deep into the personal exploration of her creative roots, the latest release from Danish trombonist Lis Wessberg mixes the warm vitality of New Orleans jazz with the reflective hum of the ECM sound, and the boundary-pushing songwriting of Radiohead.

LP / CD / Digital

RASMUS SØRENSEN "TRAITS"
"sounds like an old soul, with his breezily attractive mainstream Bill Evans-influenced lyricism" (Jazzwise)



LP / CD / Digital

KALAHA: "NORD HAVN"
"Their seventh hallucinatory trip is a riveting adventure, a melting pot of exploration that touches on elements of both tribal and tropical – all tied together by a compelling sense of funky rhythm and dance!" (Presto Music)

LP / CD / Digital

DAVID MIILMANN GROUP: "WHAT'S LEFT"
With Miilmann's blues-infused slide guitar playing in the spotlight, 'What's Left' is a fierce statement of truth and individuality by a young band brought together by collective hardship.

LP / CD / Digital

JACOB ANDERSKOV: "I SANG"
"a captivating conversation with Denmark's Højskolesangbogen, a cherished late 19th-century compilation of singalongs, folk songs, and hymns deeply intertwined with the essence of Danish cultural identity" (Jazziz, USA)

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Charting the Jazz Message/July 2024

Photo by Laurent Elie Badessi

David Murray (seated) with Marta Sanchez (left), Luke Stewart (centre) and Russell Carter (right)

The *Jazzwise* Chart

What's spinning on the Jazzwise team's stereos...

1 David Murray Francesca *Intakt*
2 Billy Cobham Spectrum *Atlantic*
3 Kathrine Windfeld Aldebaran *Stunt*
4 Chick Corea/Béla Fleck Remembrance *Thirty Tigers*
5 John Escreet The Epicentre of Dreams *Blue Room Music*
6 Tomeka Reid Quartet 3+3 And Then *Cuneiform*
7 Archie Shepp The Way Ahead *Impulse!*
8 Hampton Hawes For Real! *Contemporary/Craft Recordings*
9 Nina Simone Blackbird: The Colpix Recordings 1959-1963 *SoulMusic Records/Cherry Red*
10 Kiefer Trio Something For Real *Stones Throw*

SOUND RECORDS

Jazz gems from the Stroud vinyl emporium www.facebook.com/soundstroud

1 Carlos Nino & Friends Placenta *International Anthem*
2 Hank Mobley Workout *Blue Note*
3 Ines Loubet Senga *Albert's Favourites*
4 Harold Land Choma (Burn) *We Want Sounds*
5 Hermanos Gutierrez Sonido Cosmico *Easy Eye Sound*
6 Jasmine Myra Horizons *Gondwana*
7 Ornette Coleman New York Is Now *Blue Note*
8 Alan Braufman Infinite Love Infinite Tears *Valley Of Search*
9 Sam Grendel & Sam Wilkes The Doober *Leaving Records*
10 Ethnic Heritage Ensemble Open Me, A Higher Consciousness of Sound *Spiritmuse*

ONE JAZZ

Spontaneous infinity with Jez Nelson and crew online at www.onejazz.net

1 Fabian Dudek Distant Skies We Dream *Traumton*
2 Miles Okasaki Miniature America *Cygnus*
3 Kim Cass Levs *Pi Recordings*
4 Glasshopper I'm Not Telling You Anything *Connell Jazz Social*
5 Something Else ft Vincent Herring Soul Jazz *Smoke Sessions*
7 Sol Sol Almost All Things Considered *Sail Cabin*
8 Oded Tzur My Prophet *ECM*
9 Oreglo Peck *Brownswood*
10 Nicole McCabe Mosaic *Ghost Note*

EUROPEAN JAZZ MEDIA

Selected by Europe's leading jazz media

1 Fergus McCreadie Stream *Edition*
2 Yelena Eckemoff Romance Of The Moon *L&H Productions*
3 Wadada Leo Smith & Amina Claudine Myers Central Park's Mosaics *Red Hook*
4 Federico Calcagno Octet Mundus Inversus *Habitable*
5 Gary Husband Songs Of Love And Solace *BFD*
6 Uivo Zebra & Horns Sombras *Self-release*
7 The Beat Freaks & Ralph Allesi Mechanics Of Nature *self-release*
8 Kaluza Quartett Jack *AUT*
9 Brad Mehldau After Bach II & Après Fauré *Nonesuch*
10 Jake Long City Swamp *New Soil*

UNION MUSIC

Pre-loved and new jazz gems from the Lewes vinyl lovers

1 Wadada Leo Smith & Amina Claudine Myers Central Park's Mosaics *Red Hook*
2 Idris Ackamoor Afro Futuristic Dreams *Strut*
3 Bill Frisell Orchestras *Blue Note*
4 Blue Notes In Concert Volume One *Ogun*
5 Malik's Emerging Force Art Trio Time And Condition *Moved By Sound*
6 Brother Jack McDuff Ain't No Sunshine *Reel To Real*
7 Sonny Rollins A Night At The Village Vanguard Complete Masters *Blue Note*
8 Oregon Violin *Vanguard*
9 Sirone Artistry *Moved By Sound*
10 Michael Mantler No Artistry *Watt*

GUEST CHART: LOVE SUPREME JAZZ FESTIVAL – *Sound selections from the Love Supreme Jazz Fest team*

1 Fergus McCreadie Stream *Edition*
2 Cécile McLorin Salvant Ghost Song *Nonesuch*
3 Hiromi Sonicwonderland *Concord*
4 Meshell Ndegeocello The Omnichord Real Book *Blue Note*
5 Rosie Frater-Taylor Featherweight *Cooking Vinyl*
6 Manu Katché Third Round *ECM*
7 Alice Russell I Am *Tru Thoughts*
8 Balimaya Project When The Dust Settles *New Soil*
9 Billy Cobham Spectrum *Atlantic*
10 Christian McBride Prime *Mack Avenue*

PRESTO MUSIC

'The store and streaming service that gets jazz to your door...' www.prestomusic.com/jazz

1 Lakecia Benjamin Phoenix Reimagined (Live) *Ropeadope*
2 John O'Gallagher Beast *Whirlwind Recordings*
3 Oded Tzur My Prophet *ECM*
4 Julius Rodriguez Evergreen *Verve*
5 Luciana Morelli Words of the Wind *Habitable*
6 Finn Rees Dawn is a Melody *Mr Bongo*
7 Luke Stewart Unknown Rivers *Pi Recordings*
8 Sean Khan Presents the Modern Folk & Jazz Ensemble *Acid Jazz*
9 Mark Murphy Sings *Muse*
10 Vidya Adi Shakti *Prophone*

THE BLUEPRINT – JAZZ FM

Chris Philips' maraud through new jazz heat

1 Andromeda Turre From The Earth *self-release*
2 Nicole McCabe Mosaic *Ghost Note*
3 Jake Long City Swamp *New Soil*
4 The Flame Towards The Flame Vol.2 *577*
5 Jihye Lee Orchestra Infinite Connections *Motéma Music*
6 Brandon Ross Phantom Station Off The End *Sunnyside*
7 Elton Dean's Unlimited Saxophone Company Elton Dean's Unlimited Saxophone Company *Ogun*
8 Alan Braufman Infinite Love Infinite *Tears Valley Of Search*
9 Something Else Soul Jazz *Smoke Sessions*
10 LATRALA LATRALA *Otherly Love*

JAZZ FM

Essential sounds from Jazz FM on DAB www.jazzfm.com

1 Sean Khan Presents The Modern Jazz & Folk Ensemble *Acid Jazz*
2 Neil Cowley Trio Entity *Hide Inside Records*
3 Jasmine Myra Rising *Gondwana*
4 Madeleine Peyroux Let's Walk *Just One Recordings*
5 Bill Laurance & The Untold Orchestra Bloom *ACT*
6 Pat Metheny MoonDial *BMG/Modern Recordings*
7 Zara McFarlane Sweet Whispers *K7*
8 Jo Harrop The Path Of A Tear *Lateralize*
9 Nova Vida Ritmo Da Vida *CBI Recordings*
10 Sefi Zeisling The Librarian *Tru Thoughts*

THE CUTTING EDGE

Mike Chadwick selects hot new releases www.soulandjazz.com

1 Snarky Puppy Sylva 10th Anniversary (Remixed & Remastered) *GroundUp*
2 Morgan/Husband/Feraud A Soul in Time *self-release/Bandcamp*
3 Alex Sipiagin Horizons *Blue Room Music*
4 Nduduzo Makhathini uNomkhubulwane *Blue Note*
5 Juan Dhas Aether *self-release/Bandcamp*
6 Iiro Rantala Tough Stuff *ACT Music*
7 Kenny Barron Beyond This Place *Artwork*
8 Gregory Groover Jr Lovabye *Criss Cross*
9 Julius Rodriguez Evergreen *Verve*
10 Conrad Herwig The Latin Side of McCoy Tyner *Savant*

Terrence Blanchard band

Meeting the donkeys

Tim Garland and Jason Rebello

GETTIN' DOWN ON THE FARM

This month **EDDIE MYER** travels to Northern Ireland's top jazz outpost – Magy's Farm in County Down – to find out about a thriving 'agricultural' jazz hot-spot that's attracting international names

If you study the touring itineraries of international jazz musicians for this year, chances are that you'll find there's a new Northern Ireland venue appearing on their routings.

Southern Ireland has a legendarily rich musical culture, but apart from some notable festivals, jazz has been rather sparsely represented on the Ulster landscape. Enter stage right the dynamic duo of Linley Hamilton (see also The Player, page 56) and award-winning poet Maggie Doyle, and their remarkable joint project Magy's Farm. It's a real farm, owned by Maggie's family for generations, out in County Down within sight of the famous Mourne Mountains, and now featuring a compact but perfectly equipped 40-seat performance venue. But Magy's isn't just a venue: it's also a project and a mission statement.

Linley Hamilton is best known as a trumpeter, bandleader, educator, broadcaster (his axed BBC show is much missed) and tireless promoter of jazz music. He filled us in on the story behind Magy's Farm: "The farm was in Maggie's family, and we used to keep donkeys there – we still do! But the vision was always to create something for music and art in that part of the world because there wasn't really anything there.

"We initially thought we would create a space that maybe I could rehearse in, or maybe shoot some videos or teach online from or whatever. We demolished one of the old barns and rebuilt it as a venue. And we put a balcony in to maximise the space and we said, well, sure, we could maybe put on a gig. And then the university was throwing out 40 chairs, so I bought the 40 chairs, and then I bought a small PA: all those things kind of came together and we looked at each other and saw 'Ah, okay, so this is possible'. And it went from there."

Opening in 2020, Magy's is already attracting artists from across Europe, the USA, and across the UK. How have they managed to lure so many top-flight players down the winding back country roads?

> ***"There's total silence because it's in the country. There's the donkeys in the field, there's a full sky at night. It's very, very peaceful and tranquil"***

"We are here to serve the music and bring it to the people. Artists come first. I'm a touring musician myself, so I know how expensive it is. We provide accommodation, we provide food, and we make it viable for touring artists to come to Ulster. We got the best piano we could afford, and we got advice from Adam Nussbaum, who plays drums in my band, to get the best drumkit we could.

"And then we bought a bass amp on the recommendation of Mark Egan. We bought a double bass because we realised that that's the one deal breaker for a lot of bands that are touring. And we put the word out and built an audience right here in the community. And the word got out."

Word certainly has got out, and not just across the UK and Europe: Ari Hoenig and Seamus Blake were some early bookings, Larry Goldings brought his trio with Peter Bernstein and Bill Stewart, and Gilad Hekselman, Nate Wood and Will Vinson appeared as Trio Grande: by 2023 Magy's became an essential destination for international artists of the stature of Eddie Henderson, Jason Rebello, Aaron Parks and Tim Garland, Irish musicians like Scott Flanigan and John Donegan, and a constant stream of top-flight UK players.

And a gig at Magy's isn't just your regular club show, for artists and audiences alike.

"There's total silence here because it's in the country. There's the donkeys in the field, there's a full sky at night. It's very, very peaceful and tranquil. And we have a relationship with our audience and our artists: they trust us because they know that we put the music first. If you come to Magy's as an artist, we'll welcome you into our home. And if you come to see a show, you'll be hanging with the artists afterwards in our kitchen, It's about building a community - that idea of people going to hear great players so it inspires them to to go and create themselves."

What now? "We grow and build. it's important in both directions: firstly it facilitates artists playing here and traveling and seeing this beautiful country. And secondly, it's an opportunity for local people to come and see something and have their lives transformed. Now with Magy's, Scott's Jazz Club in Belfast, Bert's Jazz Bar, the Brilliant Corners Festival, there are 483 jazz gigs a year within 30 minutes of Belfast, which isn't bad!"

Photos: Courtesy of Maggie Doyle

"FOR THE FANS"–

LIFTING THE LID ON 'LOUIS IN LONDON'

With the news that Louis Armstrong's final BBC concerts are to get an official release, Alyn Shipton time-travels back to the summer of 1968 when the legendary trumpeter's All Stars appeared on the telly – after the cricket!

On 2 July 1968, Louis Armstrong and what was to be the final line-up of the All Stars, played two concert sets for the BBC in London. The band had come to the UK to play for a fortnight at the Batley Variety Club, followed by the BBC Television Theatre event, and then four London shows – two apiece at the New Victoria Theatre and the Odeon Hammersmith. It was a big deal for the band, as Armstrong was reputedly paid $10,000 a week by the West Yorkshire club, a small fortune in the late 1960s, and he was also planning to celebrate what he believed to be his 68th birthday during the Hammersmith shows. He had been featured with the All Stars in two BBC broadcasts in 1965, but the 1968 appearance found him in respite from the various health issues that had beset him in the previous three years, and surrounded by a band that supported his singing and stellar playing to perfection.

The 1965 band still featured his long-term pianist Billy Kyle, who died in 1966, and so by 1968 the piano chair was occupied by Marty Napoleon, who had been Kyle's predecessor in 1952-3. Long-term bassist Arvell Shaw quit the band during the 1965 tour, and by 1968 his replacement, the very experienced Buddy Catlett, had gelled beautifully with Marty and the band's drummer Danny Barcelona, who was celebrating his tenth anniversary in the band. The 1965 band had Eddie Shu on clarinet – better-known as a tenor saxophonist from work with Buddy Rich, Charlie Barnet and Gene Krupa, although he also doubled as a stage ventriloquist – but he was a short-term replacement for Joe Darensbourg, and had then been followed briefly by Buster Bailey. When clarinetist Joe Muryani joined the line-up, in the spring of 1967, this final edition of the All Stars was complete.

Armstrong's Batley appearances were a coup for the club, as between making the booking and the band's appearances, Armstrong had topped the UK charts with 'What a Wonderful World'. The older members of the school jazz band I played in booked tickets for Batley as soon as they were announced, and set off in an old Volkswagen minibus to hear our idol.

I was only 14 and my parents forbade me to go with an inexperienced driver and a busload of older teens, but then, further enthused by the reports of the wonderful music they had heard, the great news came that there would be two concerts on BBC television. I missed the first broadcast, on *Show of the Week*, on 2 August 1968, because it was the middle of the school holidays and we were staying in a place with no television. But having heard how great it was, I was all prepared to watch the second show on 22 September.

In those days, BBC 2 was not an entirely full-time network. Just as, each summer, cricket would take over Radio 3 on medium wave, the game took over the still-new 625-line TV service during the day, but otherwise BBC 2 operated mainly in the evenings. On 22 September, there'd been a thrilling day's cricket from Trent Bridge, and I remember watching Ted Dexter's International Cavaliers taking on an international 11 captained by Gary Sobers.

But then after the *News Review at 7*, the concert with the All Stars began. It was amazing to see Armstrong, in fine form (though much thinner than in all the familiar photographs), leading this band through many of his greatest hits. The showmanship was underplayed but always there, and the band's recent experience of playing in the same place for several nights, rather than dashing from one concert to another, made the music both thrilling and relaxed. (Following Louis, after a 45-minute programme about Malaysian rainforests, there was a quite different musical treat as classical stars including Dame Janet

"There'd been a thrilling day's cricket from Trent Bridge... then after the News Review at 7pm, the concert with the All Stars began"

Photos: Armstrong House Museum, BBC Archives

Baker, Alfred Brendel, Peter Pears and Benjamin Britten took part in a celebration of Schubert.)

In 1971, a selection of the music from both the BBC concerts was issued on a Brunswick LP called *Louis Armstrong's Greatest Hits Recorded Live*. But that only contained nine tracks, and given that there had been two 50-minute shows (with only three pieces, 'Sleepy Time down South', 'Hello Dolly' and 'What a Wonderful World', duplicated) it seemed likely that lurking somewhere must be some high quality recordings of the rest of the performances.

Now Decca/Verve has added five previously unreleased tracks, one of them a different – and better – version of 'Hello Dolly', to create the new album *Louis in London*, including every track on which Louis himself is featured as trumpeter and/or vocalist, save for a 'blink and you'll miss it' 45-second version of 'Mop Mop'.

Now let's hope Decca will get round to a companion volume with the rest of the missing tracks, including a staggeringly brilliant 'Sunrise, Sunset', by Marty Napoleon; Joe Muryani's feature 'Undecided'; Tyree Glenn's showcase on 'Mood Indigo'; and most important of all, a beautiful heart-rending version of 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco' by the band's singer Jewel Brown, the only member of that edition of the All Stars still living. In an age when all female musicians ought to be celebrated, she's inexplicably absent from this otherwise first-rate set. ***Louis In London is* reviewed on page 50**

In May 1969, Armstrong invited Louis Panassié, son of famed French jazz historian Hugues Panassié, and his wife Claudine over to his home in Corona, Queens, NYC. Armstrong had something new and exciting to show off to his visitors: a set of Tandberg reel-to-reel tape decks his wife Lucille had installed in his den while he was in the hospital (where he'd been treated for his ongoing heart and kidney problems). Satch had always been interested in recording technology and hi-fi – were he alive today he'd probably be tagged as an 'audiophile' – so the arrival of the tape machines was a source of great comfort and pleasure for the ailing Pops.

Early in the evening, Armstrong played a tape he was very excited about: of the concerts he'd done for the BBC in London the previous July.

According to renowned Armstrong biographer and scholar Ricky Riccardi in his excellent sleevenotes for *Louis In London*, the tape "transported him back to the stage [in the UK capital] the previous summer, when he was feeling well, playing excellently, and singing beautifully. It was uncertain if he'd ever make it back to that point again, so on that May 1969 night with the Panassiés, he found himself living vicariously through the magic of tape, lost in that concert recording from London".

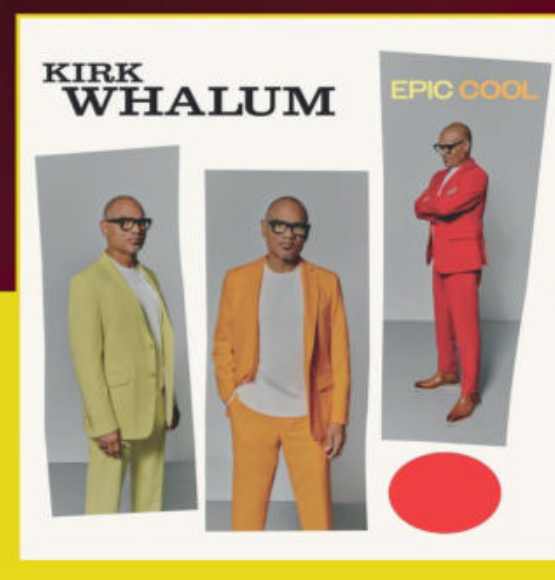
The great trumpeter was apparently so delighted with (and energised by) the London performance tapes that he copied them several times for friends. In a letter to [All Stars drummer] Danny Barcelona in January 1969, Armstrong wrote, "Be on the lookout for a tape I'm sending to you... It's the recording that we did in London, July 2nd, 1968, for the BBC. The most relax thing we've ever done. S'too much, man."

He was determined that the performance be widely heard and took the master tape and affixed a piece of tape to the outside cardboard box. On it he scrawled, "FOR THE FANS". Now, 53 years after his death, fans are getting to hear at least part of the tape at last and it doesn't disappoint. *Louis In London* (out on 12 July) is too much, man. **Kevin Whitlock**

*"**EPIC COOL**, THE RELEASE OF WHICH MARKS FIVE YEARS AFTER WHALUM'S LAST STUDIO ALBUM, IS ANOTHER TIER OF MUSICALITY THAT THE INSTRUMENTALIST HAS ACHIEVED, SCALING UP THE HIPNESS, VITALITY, SOULFULNESS, AND VIBES TO A MONUMENTAL LEVEL."*
— CLASSICALITE

PHOTO: EVELYN FREJA

KIRK WHALUM



Saxophone icon **Kirk Whalum** blasts off with his highly anticipated new album ***Epic Cool***, an electrifying collection of original grooves. Teaming up with producer Greg Manning (Keb' Mo', Herb Alpert, 2x GRAMMY® nominee, composer/collaborator on 10 #1 Billboard hits), Whalum focuses on his song-writing to craft an album that's passionate and spirited on a monumental scale, but with his trademark soul. From danceable hits like "Ba-De-Yah!" to melodic, sultry jams (Whalum calls "Pillow Talk" the strongest song he's written in 20 years), ***Epic Cool*** weaves a musical story that has wide, cross-genre appeal. Get ready to groove because ***Epic Cool*** is anything but ordinary.

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Northern Lights Are Shining

Winning over concert audiences with their groove-heavy improv, and gathering plaudits for their debut EP, **Boreal Sun** are looking to warm things up in these cold, dark times. **Jane Cornwell** spoke to its founders Matt Roberts and Liselotte Östbloom

"I'm from the Nordic north, and Matt [Roberts] is from the north of England," says Liselotte Östbloom, the Swedish vocalist fronting Boreal Sun, a fast-rising London crew with a love of groove and improvisation, plus a remit to change the world for the better. "We feel our music flashes with ideas, which relates to light, insight, a sense of perspective. It's like warm sun on your face in a cold climate."

Östbloom had arrived in London from Stockholm in 2018 to study for an MA at the Royal Academy of Music, where her tutors included Norma Winstone and Pete Churchill, when she met multi-instrumentalist and arranger/orchestrator Matt Roberts at a friend's rounders match in Regents Park.

The two found common ground in their shared musical influences: Roberts in particular was a fan of London's acid jazz and broken beat movements of the 1990s, as fed by Herbie's Headhunters and *Native Dancer*-era Wayne Shorter.

"That's some of the grooviest music ever made," says Roberts, a Leeds Conservatoire alumnus whose own Biggish Band - in which he plays trumpet - has devoted tribute shows to the likes of Shorter and Freddie Hubbard and played everywhere from Ronnie Scotts to the EFG London Jazz Festival.

"You can hear Wayne and Herbie's harmonies in broken beat artists like Kaidi

Photo: Chris Hargreaves

TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF...

Real Earth Songs

With a penchant for meditative jazztronica, field recordings and folk songs, **Laura Misch** operates in the spaces between easy definitions. **Gail Tasker** caught up with the saxophonist and singer as she returns with an all-acoustic new album, *Sample The Earth*

Laura Misch is a London-based singer, saxophonist and producer who cannot be easily pinned down. Her debut EP, *Shaped by Who We Knew*, released in 2016, is an atmospheric mix of neo soul and jazz along the lines of Hiatus Kaiyote and Moonchild, whereas her latest album *Sample The Earth* veers more towards stripped-back chamber jazz. Along the way, she's made forays into leftfield pop and electronic music, with a collection of critically-acclaimed releases. It's clear, on interviewing Misch, that her career has been a journey of exploration, navigating her relationship towards sound, with all its infinite possibilities. When asked about her musical beginnings, the artist is contemplative: "What came first? I guess materially, the voice, because you're not born attached to a saxophone, or any production software. I kind of became aware of singing early on, but not in a recorded sense. More just like for joy."

Coming from a musical family – her brother Tom is a successful jazz guitarist/singer/producer – Laura picked up the saxophone aged 11, inspired by the fictional character Lisa Simpson amid a scarcity of female saxophonist role models. A local saxophonist became her teacher, one who worked in horn sections for 1990s pop bands like S Club Seven. Through this pop culture lens, Misch fell into the rabbit hole of music production.

"I always thought that the saxophone had this potential to be more than just a monophonic instrument. I thought about the saxophone as textural, creating chordal structure, how it can be manipulated in so many different ways. And I guess I was always kind of interested in looping, or repetition in music anyway. So I started using a loop pedal, and then quickly was like, this is only gonna get me so far. I need to learn how to produce because then you can just do so much."

She discovered the likes of [electronic composers] Caterina Barbieri and Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith, and was inspired further by the 2020 music documentary *Sisters with Transistors*. From there, last year's album *Sample The Sky* was born. Made in collaboration with electronic artist William Arcane, the record includes a hefty quantity of field recordings, something that Misch has been exploring as she considers the separation between music and sound:

"Through looking into more leftfield electronic scenes, I was getting really inspired by sound beyond what we kind of define as the narrow field of music. [I've] always just been fascinated by soundscapes and textures within production, more than anything else. Life is so entwined with creativity. I was finding the pandemic times incredibly claustrophobic, needing to be outside and just finding a lot of solace in the sounds of nature. And yeah, that's all been woven back into the music."

Tathum and Brotherly, who found a way to make it feel of the moment. We hope to do the same."

Boreal Sun's EP *Dawn* is already getting its flowers, following on the heels of a clutch of singles supported by the usual tastemaker-come-influencers, Jamz Supernova and Gilles Peterson among them.

Its six tracks are each lovingly, differently crafted, their textures and angles augmented by compositional rigour, the aformentioned influences and input from some of the capital's most happening youngish jazz musicians.

"This EP is about collective change and encouraging the next generation to take bold steps into the future," says Östbloom, who has variously performed with Ghost-Note, TRUE THINK and Sly5thAve; toured her experimental alter-ego smiling LIS; and released a debut EP, *A Paintbrush Unfold*.

Östbloom's talents so impressed Roberts - who'd been following her on Instagram - that he jettisoned his original idea of a project featuring a roster of vocalists. Their concerns for the world also dovetailed: lyrics for songs such as 'Horizon' ("A new horizon's dawning, the gathering of the streams, to bring a resolution, to a forgotten dream") came out of improvisatory workshops, with the poetry-loving Östbloom adding phrases that suited melodic lines - and the times. Opener 'First Light' is a short, evocative instrumental prelude symbolising a fresh start.

"Because Liselotte's lyrics kept referencing new beginnings, I wanted to reflect that musically, " says Roberts. "So I went down early to my local park, recorded the dawn chorus, transcribed it into musical notation then got Gareth Lockrane to record it on flute and piccolo."

A collaborator with the likes of Cleo Sol and Jorja Smith, he agrees that his work with the wildly ambitious collective SAULT - particularly their choral and orchestral records *AIR* and *AIIR* - has encouraged his pursuit of music-making without compromise: "I tried to carry that into this project. For example, I was hearing this epic string orchestra moment at the end of 'Horizon'. Once I might have shied away from recording something that ambitious but this time I thought, 'Let's do it!'"

The sheer range of musicians featuring on *Dawn* reinforces the message of unity and community. Yahael Camara Onono of the Balimaya Project is on djembe and talking drum on 'New Beginning', which began life as an instrumental inspired by West African music. Bassist/producer Robin Mullarkey, violinist Sammy Singh, drummer Josh Blackmore make their presence felt; written as a letter to a young child that is trying to make sense of the world, 'Gold Topics' features a solo by visiting NYC-based trombonist Raymond James Mason. An extended solo by saxophonist Emma Rawicz graces 'Can We Take a Moment?', the EP's grooving Snarky Puppy-meets-Al Jarreau-esque closer.

There are no samples. Brass, woodwind, percussion and strings were all played live. Even the synths on the club banger 'HTML Code', a think-while-you-dance exploration of hedonism, are analogue.

"We wanted the music to have the warmth and humanity that comes with recording live instruments, " says Roberts. "It was also an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding musicianship of our friends on the scene. As the tracks evolved, certain personalities appeared in our imaginations. Like, 'We need Emma Rawicz on this! We've got to get Yahael from Balimaya for this!' Luckily everyone we asked said yes."

"We tried to bring together a wide breadth of musicians, including those who might not typically work together. The message here is unity. While there's hope and optimism in our lyrics, it's not lazy or passive - there's work to do. We have to work together and organise if we are to build a better future - and we will."

TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF... TAKING OFF...

It was while touring *Sample The Sky* that Misch began to experience a desire to return to the earthiness in sound, culminating in the sister album *Sample The Earth*, out in June of this year. Despite being a Londoner, or perhaps because of it, Misch has developed an affinity towards natural sounds, and uses them in her creative practice.

"You're so enveloped in industrial sound, that [natural sound] becomes quite magical. I think there's a primal desire to find spaces that aren't just super saturated. And maybe growing up here, that just wasn't my experience. Maybe it's in the last four, five years that it's become something. And I think the idea of field recording as well is something that was so powerful for me, because my early introduction to production was mediated through a laptop. So I'd be playing instruments on a laptop that I'd never seen in real life. And you felt kind of severed from the source of the sound. Whereas when you go out and field record, you have a real bodily connection to something, and I value that. I'm not a purist about it, but I just began to really crave that."

Over the past couple of years, Misch has widened her collaborative net, working with musicians Marysia Osu and Tomáš Kašpar, as well as choreographer Chantel Foo. She's also a member of NYX, an electronic drone choir which has been making waves via its innovative, collaborative projects. She has a few EPs and albums under her belt, yet even with these accomplishments, she exudes an authentic curiosity towards the unknown, and an ongoing desire to learn and adapt her approach to music-making. Her summer plans, which involve recording her saxophone while wild camping, are a testament to this:

"I want to explore what a modular set-up looks like, where you have to work with the parameters of daylight, or the weather, or how much power you have. I'm interested in what it's like to create outside of studio contexts, but also the inspiration you can get from being outside and feeling really connected."

While these plans sound enviably dreamy, they also characterise Misch as a musician who is going beyond the usual endless cycle of recording, releasing, promoting, and touring, in search for something more nourishing and meaningful.

Laura Misch headlines Union Chapel, London on 19 September

Photo: Seunwong Jung

Billy's Full Spectrum Dominance

Remarkably, **Billy Cobham** turned 80 in May but – with a busy year of touring including a headline spot at this month's Love Supreme Jazz Festival – you wouldn't know it. Ahead of all that, he opens up to **Stuart Nicholson** in an exclusive interview, covering his early life in military bands, tours with Horace Silver, getting fired from the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and his classic jazz-rock album *Spectrum*

I was fired from Mahavishnu," says drum legend Billy Cobham matter-of-factly. After the band played Detroit on 23 December 1973, the musicians went their separate ways. McLaughlin, chastened by the experience, set about regrouping in early 1974.

"It was time for me to be gone," continues Cobham. "Even though I was told I was going to be in the band, the next thing I knew my last cheque bounced, and I got a message saying, 'you're no longer with us'; that's the way management works, and still does today I guess."

It was a strange ending for a band whose music had, in the space of three short years, redefined the possibilities of jazz-rock. While guitarist John McLaughlin brought a stunning technique and a deep harmonic understanding to the music – "I was conscious of what I wanted to do, the way I wanted to play, nobody else was doing," he told weekly newspaper *Melody Maker* – Billy Cobham was similarly taking jazz drumming to the next level. If Tony Williams had been the drummer of the 1960s, then Cobham raised the bar with performances such as 'Meeting of the Spirits' from Mahavishnu's debut *Inner Mounting Flame* and 'One Word' from follow-up *Birds of Fire*, become *the* undisputed drummer of the 1970s.

"That's how Weather Report came together, that's how Mahavishnu came together, that's how Eleventh House came together – just co-operations just for the hell of it, and for the love it"

Mahavishnu's intensity, tremendous volume, challenging time signatures and sheer velocity of execution forced Cobham, as he would later admit, to compete physically in terms of stamina and speed, his performances a vital element in the success of the band.

He massively expanded his drum kit with two bass drums; and the array of tuned tom-toms spread out in front were not for decoration. His renowned technical prowess enabled blisteringly fast fills around his tom-toms that still sound awesome today and were imitated by drummers around the world. As the Percussive Arts Society noted, "Billy Cobham is one of the very few who can be called a pivotal drummer in music history. He changed the way we set up our drums and cymbals, he changed the way we play them and he changed the way we play music."

Ever since his halcyon days in the 1970s and 1980s, Cobham's performances have been the stuff of legend, combining the techniques of jazz with the visceral power of rock, a compelling duality that audiences love and musicians contemplate in how-does-he-do-it wonder.

With the fiftieth anniversary of the release of his hit album *Spectrum* last year he has once again returned to the touring circuit, and UK audiences will have an opportunity of seeing a living legend as he headlines at the Love Supreme Festival on Saturday 6 July and at his 80th birthday celebration at the EFG London Jazz Festival on Wednesday 20 November at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Billy Cobham was born in Panama City on 16 May 1944, but was raised in Brooklyn from the age of three. In those formative years he had two main interests: music and baseball.

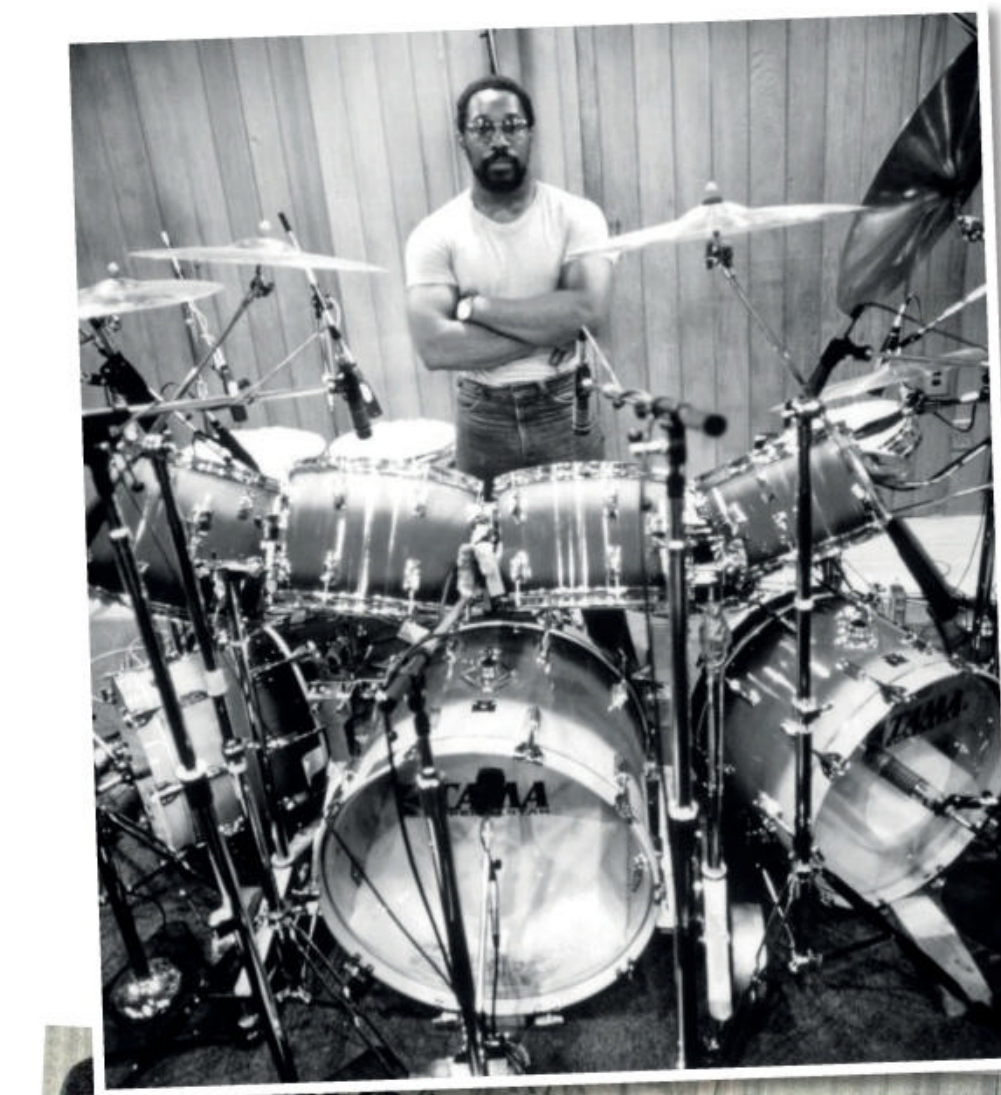
"I worked in marching bands as a young person. It was one of the things that kept me off the street. I played baseball in contests everywhere, that's the thing with being young, you really want to be the best at what you do," he reflects. Precociously talented, he passed the entrance examination for New York's High School Of Music And Art at the age of 14, an institution that attracted talented students across all New York boroughs, "I walked in with my rudimental procedures off pat because I worked extensively in marching bands. When I attended, my colleagues were Jimmy Owens, Eddie Gomez, Larry Willis – a great jazz pianist but he was a voice major then – Janis Ian, Laura Nyro, Fred Lipsius from Blood Sweat & Tears, Lew Soloff,

Billy behind his signature kit - Photo courtesy billycobham.com

Bobby Colomby, there was a whole bunch of them, Al Foster, the list goes on, all working their way to graduation. Warren Smith was a teacher there, a great percussionist with Gil Evans. It was perfect for me, not only was it a music school but it was also an art school, so the late Jeremy Steig, known for being proficient playing the flute, was actually a painter. He was studying painting, but he was a good flute player, made some great records. In a situation like in High School, the requirement was that you play together with your colleagues, and to be really good at contributing as a participant; so therefore my foundation was very strong.

"They had Billy Cobham, who was a sensation, he could create these kind of pyrotechnic things people had never heard before and when Michael Brecker soloed it was so far ahead!"

– Mike Mainieri on Cobham's time in the band Dreams



"In that kind of environment you learn a lot of things and actually your teachers help you refine them because they are your colleagues. Being young, the competitive element is very high, you don't want to be following everybody else, you want to be right in the middle of it all rubbing elbows with the best. There was a jazz orchestra called the Marshall Brown Newport Youth Band, and that band was mostly made up of all the kids from my school, and they played the Newport Jazz Festival every year and you're sitting in an environment where – from my own class was Eddie, Eddie Gomez the bassist, and behind him, sitting right behind him, was Richard Ten Ryk, later known as Richard Tee who played keyboards for Paul Simon, and he also a lot with a band called Stuff – that was who he was. It was just that kind of environment, and the beauty of it all was you didn't have to pay anything to go to school there, it was one of the special schools the Mayor of New York had way back in the 1940s, a guy named Fiorello LaGuardia, and he created special schools in the humanities, in the arts, for kids into chemistry and the sciences."

Cobham graduated in 1962: "I was 18 years old, I was just looking for jobs, that's 1962, so '63, I'm still looking, just playing around with local bands and stuff like this, and taking on jobs just to help my family out as best I could until a crazy thing happened, and that was the assassination of President Kennedy. That took a toll on me, and at that time was the Vietnam war, so I knew if I didn't do something to take care of myself I would end up carrying a rifle.

"So I decided to take the examination for the United States Army Band in Washington, and I was fortunate enough to pass and join the army band. And there a lot of schooling began, because I was in the midst of a great group of musicians that also had the same idea – Cecil Bridgewater played trumpet, Grover Washington played not just saxophone but he played bass as well, and a lot arrangers and writers, making up what we needed to do to take care of the USO. It was an organisation to entertain the troops, and I was lucky enough to teach a little music in the Naval School which got me through my time.

"I left the army in January 1968, and I was on the road with Horace Silver at the end of that month until December of the same year, where the last date I played was actually at Ronnie Scott's at the end of that month after a very long tour – at least for me! I think we did 45 shows with Horace Silver and a junket of bands – Horace, Max Roach's Quartet, Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, a gospel group called The Stars of Faith, and the Elvin Jones Trio with Jimmy Garrison and Joe Farrell. We were all on the bus together. From England we started and had to get a ferry or fly to and from the continent. That's what I remember about that. A lot of time to pull things together, and all the people involved in those groups, either you gotta to be deaf or totally dumb if you don't get something out of that!"

On his return to the States, Cobham began taking on dates as a studio musician, as life on the road held few charms for him. Initially working for Atlantic Records, he also did a lot of work CTI Records – he was on 67 albums between 1969–73, with 20 in 1973 alone.

"In New York there was an industry known as studio musicians, and that's what I thought I wanted to do. I thought if I could excel at that I could be home each day, and that was all okay. What was beautiful about doing stuff for Creed Taylor was that we were working with musicians at a higher level of proficiency, so the chances are you're going to like the first or second solos that these guys played, no question about it, and it didn't take a whole

Top: Cobham in the studio, early 1980s; bottom: with the Mahavishnu Ochestra, 1972

lot of time if you have a front line of – hypothetically – Joe Henderson, J.J Johnson and Freddie Hubbard. The thank-yous you get are not in words. When someone calls you on the phone and asks you, 'Are you free tomorrow for a session that starts at 10am, probably a double session, that's your thank-you for the things which you did before. They don't say, 'that sounds good', no, they ask you to come tomorrow. That's it.

"After while I grew stale, and things were changing anyway because of rock n' roll, so I ended up on the road with a series of things I felt I could be a better contributor at."

After he played on one of the *Bitches Brew* tracks (as well as a number of outtakes), Miles Davis tried to persuade Cobham to join his band. "I really wanted to go out on the road with Miles but on the other side I made the decision, 'what is best for me'; I wasn't that kind of roamer, I couldn't just go out and wait until he decided when we were playing, where we were playing, how much we're getting – something about it just didn't sit right with me, so I just didn't do it, that's all."

Cobham: handy with sticks, handy with his hands

Photo: Tim Dickeson

In the event he went briefly with the band called Birdsong, before joining Dreams, with Michael Brecker on tenor sax, John Abercrombie on guitar.

Vibist Mike Mainieri, a close friend of Brecker, saw Dreams several times, stating: "You've got to realise they had Billy Cobham, who was a sensation; he could create these kind of pyrotechnic things people had never heard before and when Michael soloed it was so far ahead!"

The band were signed by Clive Davis of Columbia, made two albums and broke up.

"We did have a good time, that band was a great band, and the same thing goes for the Mahavishnu Orchestra," reflects Cobham. "John McLaughlin came to me with some ideas, 'I have something, do you want to check this out?' I had time, I was subbing for people like Grady Tate and things like that back then, 'Are you free today,' 'Yeah, what's up?' We all lived down in Greenwich Village or down on the West Side, everyone tended to live in this same basic neighbourhood, and there was always something going on – 'Let's do this,' 'Let's try that.' And that's how Weather Report came together, that's how Mahavishnu came together, that's how Eleventh House came together – just co-operations just for the hell of it, and for the love it. I was honoured to be in the middle of all that stuff at that time."

Without a job after his three years with Mahavishnu, Cobham decided to return to studio work: "If I was going to go back into this field, they're not going to know me, time goes past very quickly in the studios, people forget quickly, so I wanted to do a recording of what I did as a sampler, and that's what *Spectrum* was supposed to be, as far as I was concerned. I handed it out to one or two people, but primarily it was for Mom and Dad – 'Hey, I made a record!' – and that was it. Six months later, I'm in the studios anyway and people kept telling me my record was good and I thought they were referring to records I had recorded in support of other artists on, until the head of artist development at Atlantic phoned and said, 'Where have you been? We've been trying to find you.'"

Without Cobham knowing, *Spectrum* (1973), reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* magazine Jazz Albums chart and No. 26 on the Top 200 Albums chart. With encouragement from the record company he formed a band to tour the album: "Naturally I called John [Abercrombie], the Brecker Brothers, people that I knew, and said, 'Come on, let's go out and do this!' No problem. It was easy. I was out there by myself, and I had to do what I could, we made it work."

Last year was the 50th anniversary of *Spectrum*, and naturally enough Cobham formed the Spectrum 50 band to celebrate the occasion. But when he takes the stage for the Billy Cobham at 80 celebration at the EFG London Jazz Festival in November it will be an ambition fulfilled as he will be performing his compositions with a full orchestra.

"Billy has always said he would love to perform his compositions with a symphony orchestra during the time I have known him," says trumpeter, arranger and composer Guy Barker. "Then he phoned out of the blue to say, 'We can do it!' So I am arranging the music for his Spectrum 50 Quartet plus the BBC Concert Orchestra plus my big band, so it will be quite a lot of people on the stage! We will be dong new orchestrations of repertoire including 'Red Baron,' 'Spectrum,' 'Crosswinds,' 'Stratus,' and 'A Funky Thide of Sings' plus new material he has written, such as 'Mirage' for example. The man is a living legend, he really is, and this show will be something special."

Billy Cobham's Spectrum 50 Band plays Love Supreme Jazz Festival on 6 July; and the EFG London Jazz Festival on 20 November at the Queen Elizabeth Hall

Your Billy Cobham Playlist

When Mahavishnu Orchestra's debut album *Inner Mounting Flame* was released in November 1971, nothing like it had been heard before in jazz – virtuosity reinforced by intensity and an astonishing degree of ensemble cohesion. It was the start of Cobham's global fame and the beginning of his far-reaching influence on generations of drummers, equivalent to John McLaughlin's effect on guitar players.

Jazzwise Editor-in-Chief and Cobham buff Jon Newey has compiled an extensive Spotify playlist covering the highlights of Cobham's storied and hugely varied career, from Horace Silver and Mahavishnu to electric Miles, the mega-seller *Spectrum* and beyond. Simply scan the QR code with your mobile to listen!

Billy Cobham:

The 'lost' 1980 interview

Back in March 1980, nine years after his unforgettable debut with the Mahavishnu Orchestra, Billy Cobham was still riding high. Jon Newey, then working for music weekly *Sounds*, managed to grab a rare interview with the drummer, which was published in the paper's 10 May edition. It's reprinted here (with a new introduction) for the first time in 44 years, and provides a fascinating snapshot of Cobham's career and ambitions at the time

Jon Newey (left) and Billy Cobham, March 1980

Billy Cobham was at an interesting career juncture by Spring 1980. By far the most forward looking, technically advanced and influential jazz-rock fusion drummer of the time, with a top-drawer CV encompassing Horace Silver, Dreams, Miles Davis, Mahavishnu Orchestra, CTI label sessions and a string of inventive and successful solo albums for Atlantic and Columbia, he refused to be pushed in an overtly commercial direction – like a number of fusion players in the late 1970s – and was returning to the directions opened up the hard jazz-rock edge of his landmark album release, *Spectrum*.

He'd just arrived in the UK from his base in Switzerland for three sold-out drum clinics following a gruelling five days demonstrating the Tama brand drums he endorsed and explaining the developments in quality and construction, which pointed the way to today's high level of quality and durability, to packed meetings of international drum dealers at the Frankfurt Musik Messe, then the world's biggest instrument trade fair.

At this time Cobham was highly involved in pushing the capabilities and sonic range of the acoustic drum kit to its broadest limits. His formidable technique, time and mile-wide groove, from pinpoint articulation to multi-bass drum polyrhythmic turbo-drive, demanded high levels of fitness training, practice and study as opposed to the lure of the bar and bugle, favoured by more than a few drum greats over the years. He also had a deep interest in the development of drum synthesisers and electronic kits (then in their pre-digital infancy), and drum processing effects. Conversely, he also signalled a return to his acoustic jazz roots.

Never one to seek the limelight, Cobham gave few interviews back then, but having been introduced to him days earlier at Musik Messe by jazz guitarist Maurice Summerfield, I was able to grab time with him when he arrived at the Holiday Inn, Swiss Cottage, London on Sunday 2 March 1980, where he was hot to talk drums:

Have you been impressed by any drummers recently?
"Not particularly. It's not that there aren't any good players, it's just when I'm not working, I rarely listen to anybody or go out to clubs. I have my family and I stay home. I find myself involved in a lot of physical exercise and when I go out it's to racket ball and tennis clubs."

You keep up a ferocious rate on stage. How do you do it?
"Well, trying to stay physically and mentally fit. If you have an idea of the directions you want to take your music psychologically, the intensity alone will overwhelm the physical element that has to be put into it. I've been doing a lot of weights over the past few months; I had the time off so I have been able to devote a lot of time to it. I use a club regularly and I can go there each day for a few hours. It does me a lot of good."

How about pacing? When you're playing for one and a half to two hours, pacing is imperative.
"That is a very important element. You have to come to grips with what you can do. Some things you physically cannot do. Make what little you have go past the concert so you have some left over. If you go out and enjoy what you play and contribute to the band rather than showing the audience what you as a drummer can do, you are on the right track. You should not try to overstretch yourself. If you go out with that concept you are already psychologically ahead. the body is only an instrument of the mind so you have to set yourself up right."

You're using three bass drums, and you've obviously got a special pedal arrangement for them.
"Right, there are five bass drum pedals. Two sets of the pedals are set up in tandem by rods, so on the left drum there is a pedal and beater which is attached to a pedal with no beater on the

centre drum. There is an independent pedal and beater on this drum and also a pedal with no beater which is attached to a pedal and beater on the right bass drum. So you can see you can play all three drums from the centre. Any combination you want..."

Is there anyone else using this set up?
"Yeah, Louie Bellson, he was the gentleman who made me aware of it. He brought me over to his house one day and said, 'look at this'. I heard he was playing five bass drums before this. I had the same guy who built his set-up build mine. His name is Ollie Oliver."

Do you still use the horn-shaped North drums?
"I'm still using them on occasions – they give a lot of depth, and the tone when projected through the bell shape has a dip to it. It's an interesting concept, like RotoToms and Octobans – specialised percussion. I use them for different combinations of sounds. and I'll throw in some for the forthcoming tour with [bassist] Jack Bruce."

Staccato drums, the British make similar to North, were at the Musik Messe show for the first time. Did you see them?
"Yeah, sure did, they look very, very interesting but I've not heard them yet, so I cannot say how different they'll be from a standard kit."

Any new developments at Tama drums?
"No developments as such. What we are working on together is trying to simplify what we have and trying to make it a lot more obtainable. We are rectifying problems and just trying to make the kits strong with the best projection. Maybe a few changes in the cosmetics, namely colour, there are always new finishes to try. I like the Sunburst finish a lot and want to see that developed. The main thing is for the drums to sound good and stand up to the pressure the musicians put on them."

Lately quite a few drummers have started using on stage effects such as chorus, repeat echo and phasing. Is this new to you?
"No, I've been using them since 1972. I just found my stuff very difficult to transport about. It's very interesting and logical that a lot of bands that are in the forefront today and are lucky enough to sell a lot of records are projecting these images of things that seem to be new, but I've been doing it now for about seven years."

A lot of drummers complain about stage monitoring. It seems there are still a lot of areas for development.
"Funny you should mention that. When I get home I'm taking delivery of a new modular monitoring system made by Peavey. They have made these special systems for Carmine Appice, Aynsley Dunbar and myself. Mine has 28 channels and is positioned right by the kit so I only have to lean over and mix the sound just how I want. the system sends out a sterile signal to the mixing desk in the hall so the engineer can hear it but he cannot mess with it, likewise to the engineer who is controlling the on-stage monitor mix for the rest of the band.

It's great because I'm in total control over what I hear and can adjust the mix accordingly. It's powered by 1600 watts and there is a woofer beneath me with 2 x 12's and a horn on each side plus parametric equalisation. It's a modular system and can be broken down [to suit venue size] accordingly.

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The page for musicians edited by TONY MITCHE

BAND

A LESSON FROM THE MASTER

Jon Newey grabs a rare chance to talk to Billy Cobham

very, very interesting but I've not heard them yet so I cannot say how different they'll be from a standard kit."

D'you still use North Drums?

"I'm still using them on occasions — they give a lot of depth, and the tone when projected through the bell shape has a dip to it. Its an interesting concept, like Roto-Toms and Octobans — specialised percussion. I use them for different combinations of sounds, and I'll throw in some for the forthcoming tour with Jack Bruce."

Are you listening to or impressed by any drummers at the moment?

"Not particularly. It's not that there aren't any good players, its just that when I'm not working I rarely listen to anybody or go out to clubs. I have my family and I stay home. I find myself involved in a lot of physical excercise and when I go out it's to

racket ball and tennis clu
You keep up a ferocious on stage. How do you d
"Well trying to stay physically and mentally you have an idea of the directions you want to your music psychologica intensity alone will over the physical element th to be put into it. I've b doing a lot of weights the past few months; I the time off so I have able to devote a lot of it. I use a club regularl can go there each day few hours. It does me good."
How about pacing. S drummers start the s tilt and end up dragg beat after as little as When you're playing hours, isn't pacing i
"That is a very im element. You have grips with what you Some things you p cannot do. Make w you have go past t so you have some

WHA SOP

The original *Sounds* article from May 1980

How about drum synthesisers? You've been involved with the Snyper but you don't use it much – what happened?
"I told them to come up with something to combat the Synare and Pollard (Syndrum) and the Snyper is what they came up with. I don't use it because it's not enough. All it does is the 'disco swoop'. It's just a joke. Then they made one for me; they claim they won't make for anyone else. It's got eight channels and does everything except wash your face. I use it on movie sessions and it's very interesting, but it's not an instrument."

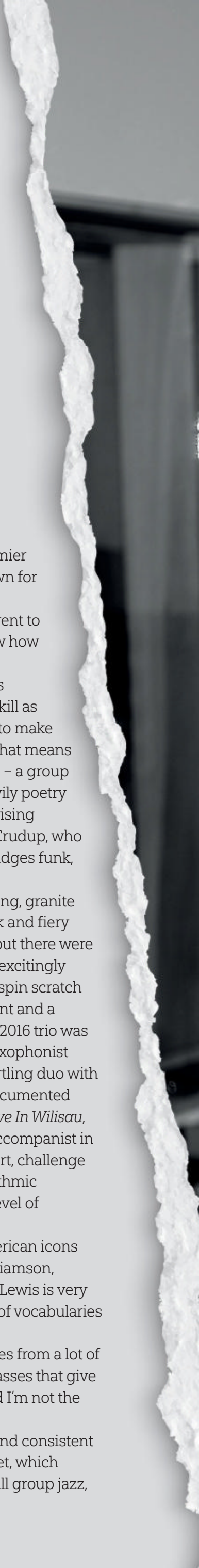
Do you think there is a future in drum synthesis?
"I have a sneaking suspicion that it will always be around on some level, but what I see now is not the answer."

I think it's down to a lack of experimentation; a lot of players settle for only one or two sounds when there are so many more to use...
"Absolutely, a total lack of experimentation, but people don't have enough time for it. We have enough trouble keeping a job! Recently a lot of stuff has gone back to rock and roll, simple and straight ahead. You go into a studio and do an album in two days for the least amount of money, there is no time for drum synthesisers, a lot have a reputation for being unreliable, you can't afford to spend hours hung up over electrical problems so they get left in the corner and passed over.

I think this is one of the overall problems with synthesisers right now. They are too complex and they take too much time for people. Look at ARP and Avatar. They made this big complex synth, and no one is buying it."

Have you any plans to get back to acoustic jazz?
"Sure I've been playing acoustically for about the past year. I never really left that way of playing. In fact, I've just finished an album for Fantasy with Ron Carter, Kenny Barron and Hubert Laws which is all acoustic. I've also been working with Gil Evans Big band, a 14-piece acoustic line-up, and we've recorded for Toshiba in Japan but it's not out yet."

MAN ON A (MUSICAL) WIRE



One of the most exciting player-improvisors of his generation, James Brandon Lewis skilfully negotiates the divide between the populist mainstream and the avant-garde. Kevin Le Gendre meets him ahead of his headline appearance at this month's Love Supreme Jazz Festival

Call it the rigours of the road. Many hazards can trip up an artist on tour, from the woe of homesickness to the blight of fatigue and the curse of illness. Above all, time, a very precious entity for improvising musicians, is hard to control. James Brandon Lewis proves as much, arriving late for our interview at London's Vortex club, where his quartet has a hotly-anticipated gig in just a few hours. He is up against the clock.

"For whatever reason, the plane didn't land 'til later than planned, then there's going through customs, getting all the luggage, so by the time you get on the bandstand you've probably gone through more than a construction worker in a day," he says, still looking fresh following a flight from Mantova, Italy. "And we're in a different city every night. Being busy is good, but being away from my family is not so good. There are plenty of challenges, but by the time I get on the bandstand it's all good."

The number of dates racked up by the 40-year-old saxophonist has certainly been increasing over the past decade in direct proportion to his high quality output.

While his Quartet recently released its fine fourth album *Transfiguration*, Lewis has been leading a quintet, Red Lily, which, like the aforesaid group, offers an inventive take on acoustic music. He is also heard to great effect in the electric ensemble, The Messthetics, a feisty collaboration with noted Washington DC punk band, Fugazi.

Furthermore, Lewis has just recorded with three leading jazz artists of different generations, trumpeter Dave Douglas, drummer Ches Smith and guitarist Ava Mendoza. More activity means more gigs.

"I used to tour in fall, winter, spring and a little summer," he says, sipping a gin and tonic. "It's been increasing this year because I am involved in various other projects. Where it used to be three times a year, it's turned into four or five. But touring is part of the goal to get the music to people."

For those who missed the sold-out show at the Vortex there will be an opportunity to see Lewis' quartet in July at A Love Supreme, one of the premier British outdoor jazz festivals of the summer, known for its broad-church bill and stunning setting.

"I've always wanted to play there. Sure it's different to some of the clubs I play," he says. "But then I know how to be me in all contexts."

Which is an interesting statement, as Lewis has emerged as an emblematic 2010s player whose skill as a composer-improviser is matched by his ability to make music that can be both accessible and abstract. That means that he is as effective in Heroes Are Gang Leaders – a group whose dense, multi-layered sound features the wily poetry of Thomas Sayers Ellis – as he is in his trio, comprising bassist Luke Stewart and drummer Warren Trae Crudup, who together make a tough but cultured noise that bridges funk, rock and the avant-garde.

Lewis made an impression with his commanding, granite hard tone and phrasing that has the bullish attack and fiery energy heard in many historic jazz reed players, but there were moments when he revealed ideas that stemmed excitingly from hip-hop, none more so than a thrilling backspin scratch effect. It pointed to serious study on his instrument and a desire to put a personal stamp on his work. If the 2016 trio was an impactful vehicle then the New York-based saxophonist upped the ante a few years later by forming a startling duo with noted Chicago drummer Chad Taylor that was documented on two CDs, 2018's *Radiant Imprints* and 2020's *Live In Wilisau*, further underlining Lewis' gifts as a soloist and accompanist in a daringly exposed setting which saw him support, challenge and be challenged by his partner's advanced rhythmic intricacies. Both musicians reached a very high level of communication.

As with his significant predecessors, from American icons such as David Murray to British legend Steve Williamson, whose flights of fancy he loosely recalls at times, Lewis is very much a contemporary player who has a number of vocabularies on which to draw.

"I have the sense to know that my playing comes from a lot of places," he says earnestly, gently adjusting the glasses that give him a scholarly air. "I'm not the 'out-est' of out and I'm not the 'in-est of in'. I think I'm just blurring the lines."

The band that has become the most effective and consistent vehicle for this *modus operandum* is Lewis' quartet, which stands as one of the most compelling acts in small group jazz,

"I have the sense to know that my playing comes from a lot of places. I'm not the 'out-est' of out and I'm not the 'in-est of in'. I think I'm just blurring the lines."

as was clear from the rapturous response it received at the London Vortex gig. Aforementioned drummer Taylor, double bassist Brad Jones, who hails from New York, and pianist Aruan Ortiz, a conspicuous addition to a long lineage of Cuban *virtuosi*, form the rhythm section that is anything but a backing band for Lewis. The saxophonist is fully aware of the founding fathers of the four-into-one, one-from-four ensemble, with Coltrane, Rollins, Shorter and Murray being primary exponents, and the great challenge of picking up the baton was one that Lewis willingly took up.

"Yes, it was very intentional," he says, instantly. Lewis is clad in a black jersey and dark jeans, a discreet style that he wears well. "I think all my work is about having a conversation with the past. So I felt in 2019 going into 20 that I had a vision for this group, my quartet. I had played with each one of the members in various contexts, and, of course, I thought about the classic groups we all know. For me having a quartet was very intentional, as it was really an opportunity for people to hear me play with a piano, which hadn't happened since 2010. So it felt like that was necessary.

> ***"I know how to be me in all contexts"***

"Even when I was writing for the trio, I still did it on the piano," he continues. "It was a way to let the audience know what I'm thinking about without me saying it explicitly. (With the quartet) it's there. I'm just thinking melody on top of melody on top of melody. Structurally, in the title track, for example, the lines are shifting and shifting a lot, as it's an exploration of 12 tones that are changing over four bars.

"On some songs the melody just keeps opening up, going different places. And that's what I do like about having a piano. I can get a lot of other colours than with the trio, although the trio music is still rich. There's a connecting thread with all the ensembles because they all have weird twists. I guess what I do is more tricky than I thought, but also it's not overly complicated. I don't think of music in terms of complexity, I have a way of working, but melody is a *lifeline*. It constantly shows up, there's something inside me that wants to emote, I just want you to feel every note I'm playing."

Lewis has made an impact precisely because of his ability to create themes that are variously full of tenderness, passion and longing while using harmonic and rhythmic devices, above all the unrelenting push of lengthy sequences of notes, that keep his compositions moving in every way. In any case his artistic development has been quite fascinating. Born in Buffalo, New York state, Lewis attended the historic black university Howard and did research into gospel traditions, which is hardly surprising given that his father is a Baptist minister, before committing to improvised music.

That said, his origins in the church have regularly surfaced in his work, from his auspicious 2014 debut album *Divine Travels* to his tribute to gospel icon Mahalia Jackson, *For Mahalia, With Love*, which also stemmed from his desire to "recognise and celebrate a powerful black woman."

But Lewis, who has a soft yet authoritative speaking voice, has had a longstanding interest in many pioneering figures as well as concepts, be they in arts and science or philosophy and politics, and he makes a notable statement about his formative years that says much about his inquisitive ways. "When I was 12 I got Joshua Redman's first album," he says calmly. " He had a tune called 'Groove X' and I was like what does that mean? It kind of intrigued me, and I found that it was about Malcolm X. The title made me think. I like referencing."

Systems are thus an important part of his creative ethos, which partly reflects the influence of one of his significant tutors, Wadada Leo Smith, with whom Lewis studied at CalArts, and who has created his own illustrated scores, known as *Ankhrasmation*. Lewis devised his Molecular approach to composition which is both metaphor and practical idea, whereby a theme can conceal many linking elements that may not be obvious on first hearing. There is a certain amount of cryptology at play.

"Basically, I was interested in the whole African-American quoting tradition, coded information, the idea of hiding things within melody lines, rhythms within rhythms. "We were hiding phrases under phrases," he says. "I was listening to recordings of my improvisations and I could hear these things like a chain of communication. I enjoy books and I enjoy the process of creating a world that can be an environment for me. And it's like a piece of artwork, it's very personal. It's away from the idea of music as utility... it's music as something that I can imagine into being as part of its own world. It's all metaphor and hidden meanings... one thing being inside another."

While Lewis is clearly an individual with a strong artistic vision, he is keen to acknowledge the role that others, Smith being a case in point, have played in his development. As has often been seen since the genesis of jazz, a younger is significantly benefitting from the wisdom of elders. Here Lewis praises William Parker, Brad Jones and Chad Taylor, in their seventies, sixties and fifties, respectively.

"Having these gentlemen in my bands has affected me very specifically because of the range of their work," Lewis says with a smile. "They've both played with really amazing people; they've played with all of my heroes. So I also wanted to move into playing with people who are older than me, more senior than me because I felt like I needed that. I needed people that are around my age, but then also a bit older.

"I needed that experience, or for that residue of their experience to rub off on me," he says, his voice becoming more emphatic. "And for them to challenge my own music. Just because I wrote it, that doesn't mean that I can't be challenged. They are such great musicians, so they can do that. With all the great bands you think of there's a beautiful relationship happening where people are trying to figure things out, to work it out, encouraging each other to focus harder, which is just a key thing in the music."

James Brandon Lewis Quartet appears at Love Supreme Jazz Festival, Glynde Place, Sussex on Friday 5 July

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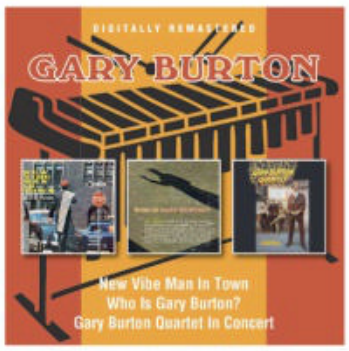

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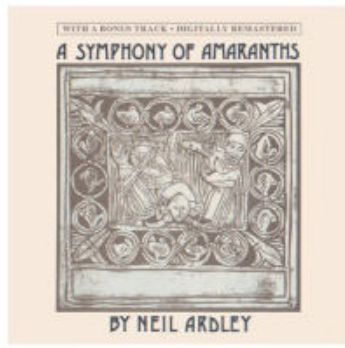

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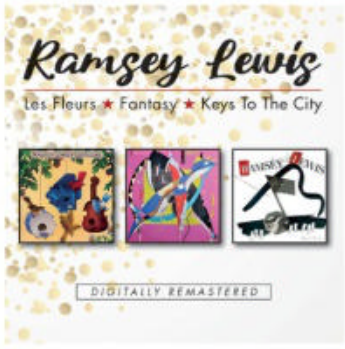

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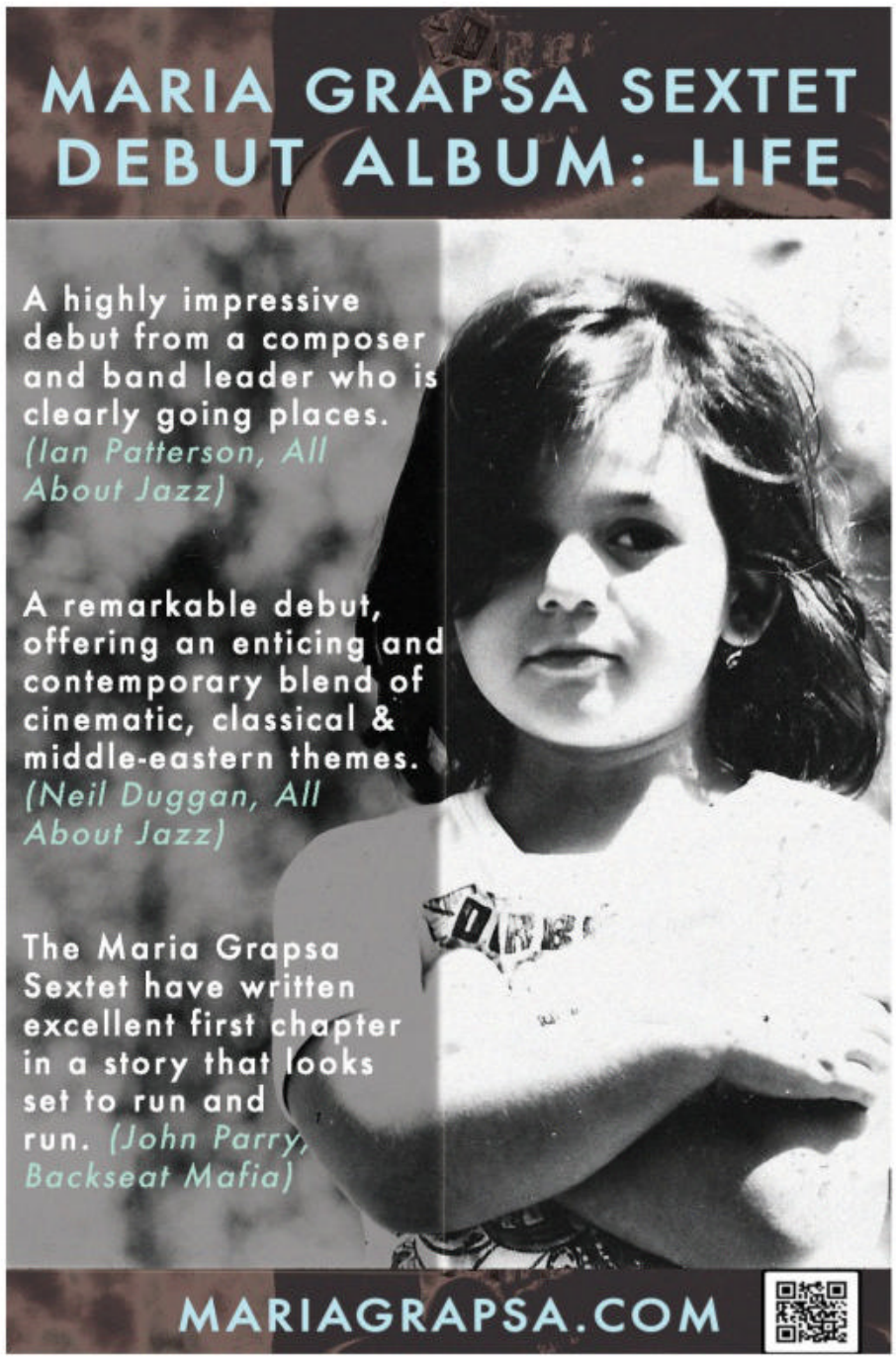

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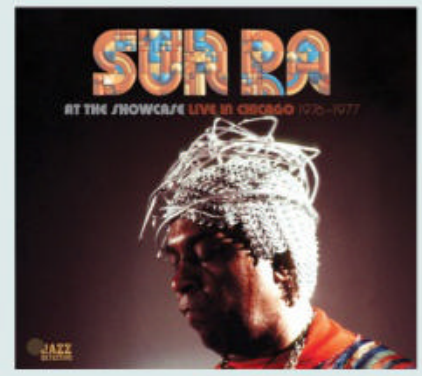

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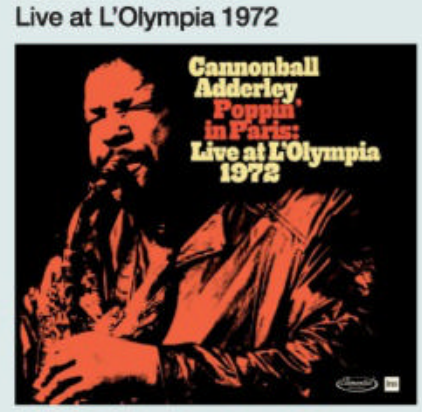

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Coming at life from a very different angle

On her new album, *Life Is Funny That Way,* singer Fay Victor is on a mission to put the music of maverick 1950s pianist Herbie Nichols into the mainstream. Kevin Le Gendre talks to her about this most unusual passion project

What might be known as 'the Great Alternative Songbook' has significant entries. Counter-standards, songs played far more seldom today than, say, Jerome Kern's 'Yesterdays', have come from the pen of writers who have not had the highest of profiles for any number of reasons. Playing in a way that bucked convention puts them on the fringes, as does the knack of writing themes that beguile. But that singularity is exactly why they matter.

Herbie Nichols, the 'swing into bebop and beyond' pianist who made visionary music in the 1950s, is a prime example. Vocalist Fay Victor recalls that it was a shock to the system when she first heard him: "A lot of the compositions went way over my head, except for 'House Party Starting', that was the one that immediately got its hooks into me. I decided I wanted to sing it. At that moment I wasn't a good enough vocalist to sing that song but it was a beautiful challenge to work on. A couple of years later I started what I would say was my first serious band with a strange repertoire; we'd do things like Eric Dolphy's 'Out To Lunch' or Mingus' 'Better Git It In Your Soul', and 'House Party.'

For those unfamiliar with Nichols' music, Victor's framing of him with Dolphy and Mingus is instructive insofar as all three, individual as they were, were at the cutting edge of modernism that had straddled post-bop and avant-garde schools. Fittingly, Victor would also put Thelonious Monk among these names as she reminisces about discovering Nichols. Her engagement with the pianist was anything but superficial because she formed the group Herbie Nichols Sung, to, as the name suggests, set his music to words, as can be heard on the fine current album *Life Is Funny That Way*.

Leading a band that features drummer Tom Rainey, bassist Ratzo Harris, pianist Anthony Coleman and saxophonist Michael Attias, Victor brilliantly negotiates the circuitous melodies and uncommon harmonies of the source material, but above all captures the boldly spontaneous, often teasingly playful character of the writing,

"I'm a little nuts in that I like learning difficult music," she says on a Zoom call from the Performing Arts faculty of the New School in Brooklyn where she teaches. "It's not only a lot of fun but inadvertently it developed so many things about my ear, my vocal technique. You have to take care in what you are doing, when you are singing certain pitches and how to connect them consistently. There is a lot of whimsy and joy and I wanted to tap into that definitely. I wanted that to be a facet of whatever came out. And the lyrics came out song by song... these melodies are singable, maybe not in an obvious way. As you say, they feel off-the-cuff and improvised."

Writing words that are both enigmatic and emotive, as a choice couplet from 'Sinners, All of Us!' shows - "To preach like mad in charismatic green/We listen in awe and stomp for more" – Victor makes it clear that she has met the high creative bar set by Nichols. That said, the singer's substantial body of work, stretching back some 30 years, includes releases that attest to her talent, such as *Darker Than Blue*, which has a version of 'House Party Starting', *Lazy Old Sun* and *Embrace*, for which she was part of a supergroup led by trombone legend Roswell Rudd. Victor has also worked with fearless improvisers such as guitarist Anders Nilsson and saxophonist Darius Jones. Blessed with a strength of tone and mercurial turn of phrase, the singer has a keen interest in exploring the relationship between instrumental and vocal music.

"When I was a budding vocalist, Carmen McCrae did a Monk record and that opened up Monk to so many people who may not have either heard his music or considered that his music could be vocal-led at all," she comments. "So part of the big impetus was to open Herbie's music up to another audience. The interesting thing is that within academia (where I work) a lot of students have definitely heard of him."

Victor's engagement with the artist also has a more personal cultural motivation.

"The other reason why Herbie Nichols is so important to me is that he was half Trinidadian, as am I," she says with an audible flush of pride in her voice.

"One of the things I've always loved about being from that culture, is this sort of real intellectual rigour while at the same time not taking oneself too seriously, and that's something I sort of find meshed in Herbie Nichols' music. I wanted to amplify the blackness that was coming out of that space and how being cerebral connects with the humour, like they just can be part of the same thing. As far as I know this project is the first one led by an African-American artist and that's important, especially with the sensibility of the Caribbean,

Photo: Deneka Penistone

although he, like myself, was raised in New York."

Victor came to address her heritage in 2011 when she guested with Other Dimensions In Music, an ensemble jointly led by Daniel Carter, William Parker, Roy Campbell and Charles Downs, and made *Kaiso Stories*. "That was me trying to amplify the beauty of calypso lyrics," she says. "I still feel very connected to that part of the world. I was in Trinidad a lot as a kid, I have a sense of what that culture feels like."

As much as she identifies as an African-American Caribbean Victor is keen to point out that Amsterdam, where she lived between the late 1990s and mid 2000s was a key stage in her artistic journey. She formed a creative bond with pianist-composer Misha Mengelberg, a major figure in the history of the Dutch avant-garde, and would also have the privilege of performing with the equally revered group ICP (Instant Composers Pool) whose members included Han Bennink, Ab Baars and Willem Breuker. These individuals were stimulating but so too, as many of her compatriots from previous generations found, such as Michael Moore and Mary Oliver, was the change of environment. Victor came to appreciate a different atmosphere and outlook.

"I was trying to figure out a place where I could develop," she explains. "I was very serious about jazz, I was living in New York city and didn't think it was the best place to shed. I had to eat first off, and secondly it was just so competitive. So I wanted to go somewhere else and figure it out. I ended up in the Netherlands and that turned out to be just amazing in the sense that I had a lot of time and space to figure things out."

Victor kept steadily pursuing her own path in the 2010s and 20s, and her body of work, that includes membership of Anthony Braxton's unique Syntactical GTM Choir, marks her out as an artist who has wrought originality from the depths of jazz history. Nothing could be more appropriate than the singer covering the music of a maverick such as Herbie Nichols, whose life had surprises as well as struggles.

"It was actually a miracle that Herbie ever landed on Blue Note, based on his career which was basically non-existent," she says with a wry chuckle. "I know he had his advocates, Mingus really advocated for him. I guess *Life Is Funny That Way* taps into the larger reason we do what we do and maybe we don't know why. This artist ended up on Blue Note and so many people are smitten with him; look at how funny that is."

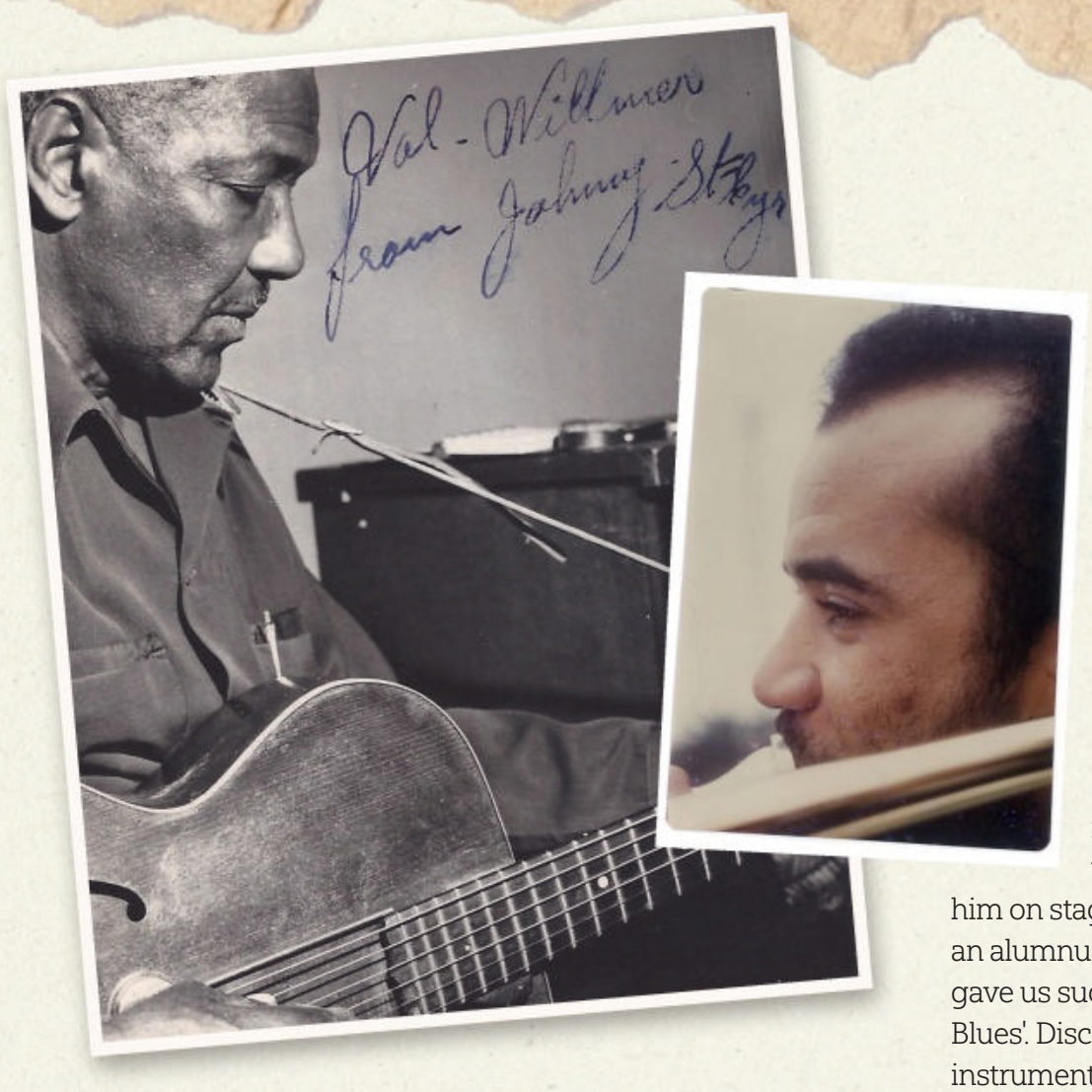
***Life Is Funny That Way* is out now on Tao Forms**

"[Having] this sort of real intellectual rigour while at the same time not taking oneself too seriously... that's something I sort of find meshed in Herbie Nichols' music"

The New Imperial Jazz Eagles, Los Angeles, 1950s. New Orleans musicians Mike DeLay (trumpet), Edgar Mosely (drums) and Polo Barnes (clarinet) used a marching band name for their revivalist group

Jazz-loving penfriends, New Orleans joys

The New Orleans revivalist movement was in full swing in California when a London teenager wrote to its stars. **Val Wilmer** was that fan. She tells the story, with photographs by **Carlos Flores**



Clockwise from left: Johnny St Cyr, Hot Five hero, signed this photo for a young Val Wilmer; Carlos Flores, trombonist, photographer and jazz fan supreme; Johnny St Cyr playing at the Blue Bird Cavern with Polo Barnes (clarinet), Edgar Mosely (drums), Ethel Hiett (piano) and others, mid-1950s

I was 13 when I ran on to the pitch at Crystal Palace to get the goalkeeper's autograph, and 14 when I waited for Richard Burton outside the Old Vic stage door. Around the same time, I found a book about jazz in the local library and cut out some of the photographs, formal portraits of black men in suits; King Oliver and Jelly Roll Morton. Shameful, I know, but the purloined prints served as backdrop to a life-altering correspondence with a musician who had played in the bands of both leaders, and with other great names in New Orleans jazz.

The postwar revivalist movement, spearheaded in part by the 're-discovery' of trumpeter Bunk Johnson, was still in full swing when jazz reached out and discovered me. From the monthly *Jazz Journal*, I learnt that a number of veterans had settled in Southern California, finding a ready-made new audience for their music among a young, mainly white, intelligentsia and Hollywood workers. Enthusiasm for the early sound crossed the pond at the same time, sweeping up youngsters like me in its wake.

What was there not to like about being young and collecting autographs? What was there not to like about jazz? As I persevered with my listening, I was befriended by elders, among them discographer Brian Rust and the writer Max Jones, who set me on the right track. Within a year, thanks to Brian, I had received a letter from drummer Baby Dodds and a Christmas card from clarinettist Omer Simeon, both of them key figures in early jazz. Dodds started out playing on the Mississippi riverboats before recording with King Oliver and Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Seven. Simeon was a star of Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers.

As I acquired addresses, I wrote to everyone, and almost everyone wrote back. I soon boasted letters from historical figures, some of whom were there at the point when ragtime turned into jazz. Most prolific of my correspondents was Paul 'Polo' Barnes, born in 1901, and better-known as a clarinettist in his later career. In the 1920s, he played saxophone alongside Simeon and Barney Bigard, in the reed section of King Oliver's band, in a line-up that also included trumpeter Henry 'Red' Allen and the great New Orleans drummer Paul Barbarin. He toured again with Oliver in the 1930s, in the often raggedy ensemble of the King's final years, and was a key figure in providing data for an Oliver biography, providing the authors with access to his daily journals from that era.

Brian Rust co-authored that biography, and kindly passed on Polo's address. Living in Los Angeles, Barnes was working at a day job like most of the musicians, but also had a regular gig at a place called the Blue Bird Cavern where Johnny St Cyr often joined him on stage. St Cyr was another of the great names of early jazz, an alumnus of the Morton and Armstrong recording bands that gave us such classics as 'Black Bottom Stomp' and 'Potato Head Blues'. Discographies list him playing banjo, but it was a unique instrument of his own creation, a banjo with guitar neck attached.

All the musicians were members of the Southern California Hot Jazz Society, an enthusiasts' conclave run by journalist Floyd Levin. I never imagined the flood of letters and snapshots to follow my tentative overtures, but Polo was an industrious correspondent, whose thoughtful letters demonstrated concern for a teenage fan. His predilection for writing began early, hence his fastidious record-keeping, and it was an attribute he kept up for the rest of his days.

"I soon boasted letters from historical figures, some of whom were there at the point when ragtime turned into jazz"

> ***If someone had honoured [Paul 'Polo' Barnes] with a letter, a reply was required, a system he followed for the rest of his days***

Above left: Polo Barnes, his wife Alma (left) and Val Wilmer, New Orleans, 1971; Right: Polo and Johnny St Cyr, date unknown

Polo played in the Young Imperial Jazz Eagles, a mixed-race band with a white woman pianist and two New Orleanians, Edgar Moseley on drums, and Mike De Lay, trumpet. With his crinkly hair and fetching smile, De Lay looked, to my young eyes, just like a jazz musician should be. A decade younger than Polo, he, too, grew up in a French-speaking New Orleans household, where the family drank wine with their meals. With a cornet thrust into his hand as a child, he played for dances organised by his aunt at Old Economy Hall, a famous jazz landmark, and sat in on Paul Barbarin's rehearsals.

The local picture appeared open and encouraging. Visiting musicians sought out sessions at the Cavern, and some of them took up residence in Los Angeles. Pianist Alton Purnell, for example. He became part of the scene in the wake of a concert tour with clarinettist George Lewis, forming a band soon afterwards, with Polo on clarinet. It did not occur to me then that these musicians might be taking a break from the oppressive atmosphere of the segregated South. To my unsophisticated mind, they were a motley crew of Angelenos from varied backgrounds, having a ball. Among them was Carlos Flores, a young Puerto Rican photographer who played trombone and became my penfriend.

Flores held parties at his house, hosting sessions that featured De Lay, Polo and St Cyr who had long abandoned the banjo and now played an amplified guitar. He wrote enthusiastically, sending me dozens of photographs, colour as well as black-and-white and including pictures of himself with Louis Armstrong and blues guitarist Brownie McGhee. Some of the musicians signed their portraits for me, beginning to develop my awareness of what might be possible in the future.

With every letter and artefact he sent me, Carlos helped stimulate my desire to become an advocate for the music. I would soon start listening to more modern forms of jazz but the understanding he gave me of New Orleans music as a way of life for its creators meant that I never abandoned it completely.

Inspired by Carlos' friendship with Johnny St Cyr, I wrote to him, too. To my surprise and delight, the Great Man replied, with a two-page letter, very warm. Acknowledgement from someone who had recorded with Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Seven, translated as two degrees of separation from some of the most celebrated moments in jazz.

As the years went by, and as I became involved in the jazz world on a professional and personal basis, the excitement engendered by the arrival of those envelopes with their red and blue stripes and Air Mail stamps drifted into the background along with Saturday afternoons at Selhurst Park and at the Old Vic. Duke Ellington and Mingus became more important to me, then Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra.

When I finally got to New Orleans, some 16 years after those pen-friendships had reached their natural conclusion, I experienced a delicious full turn of the wheel. Polo had left California in 1959, a year after our correspondence ceased. Back home, he played with the marching bands and appeared occasionally at Preservation Hall where veterans provided entertainment for tourists. When I wrote to say I was planning a visit, he invited me to stay. I spent a week with him and his wife Alma, in their tidy white

clapboard house on North Dorgenois Street, riding the bus into the French Quarter each day.

Staying at a distance from the hustle and bustle of Bourbon Street was instructive, in more ways than one. Much is made of Preservation Hall, a shabby place, kept that way with passing trade in mind. The older musicians took the gig because it paid a few dollars, and for no other reason. As I swiftly discovered, no-one was kidding anyone that this show was connected in any way with 'respect for the culture'. The musicians called it 'The Plantation'.

Every morning, I ate fresh French-style croissants with Polo and drank the coffee and chicory mix that scents breakfast kitchens throughout the region. Alma cooked simply, health issues having forced Polo to abandon the funkier Louisiana dishes, along with his beloved parades. But he practiced regularly and kept his instruments cleaned and ready, and would still play the odd 'Plantation' night whenever a guest came to town.

He still received an abundance of fan-mail, too, and in quiet moments, sat down to reply. I watched him in the kitchen, in the glow of a small table lamp, filling pages with the ornate hand-writing I remembered from my teens, carefully considering his words. There were times when Alma queried the wisdom of this activity, understandably perhaps, given the cost of postage, but Polo was adamant.

If someone had honoured him with a letter, a reply was required. It was a system he followed for the rest of his days, even after he had stopped playing completely. The music was that important to him and, I realised as I sat there watching him all those years later, it was precisely because of such early assiduousness on his part that Polo ensured it would always be that important to me.

Postscript: Among the 'names' I met during my stay was trombonist Jim Robinson, a member of Bunk Johnson's postwar band but, perhaps more intriguingly, someone who had marched with an army band in First World War France – VW.

Polo Barnes (centre), Mike DeLay (right) and an unknown trombonist

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TURNINGPOINT

“I always think the music reflects the person. What you are comes out in the music”

Guitarist **Bill Frisell** tells **Brian Glasser** about how discovering Wes Montgomery’s album *Tequila*, and the musicians on it, opened up a whole new world of music

The big moment for me was in high school, when I was around 16. I was playing clarinet in the concert band and blues and R&B guitar with my friends. On the clarinet, everything was intellectual, reading the parts. But the guitar was another side of my brain, and playing it was all about the interaction with my friends – which is pretty much what it still is now! They were organising an all-school talent show including girls doing a dance routine to a record; and the song they put on was ‘Bumpin’ On Sunset’. I’d never heard Wes Montgomery. The band director knew I played guitar, so he brought me *Tequila* and said, ‘Do you think you could learn the song? It would be so much better if there were real live music.’ I was able to mimic the song enough that it was a success: at the talent show, everyone was ‘Yeah! Great!’.

It was like the crack in what I had known before, and where I was going. I became aware there was other music happening. In drug stores then, they’d have bins of cut-out albums for 59 cents. There were a lot of old jazz records – Blue Note and Riverside. So I bought the first Wes Montgomery trio record that way. Like *Tequila*, it was incredible; and those records made me realise that I needed to find a teacher, because up to that point I was playing by ear or along with records. So I always think of ‘Bumpin’ On Sunset’ as the beginning.

There wasn’t much of a jazz scene in Denver; but there was the Folklore Center, where you could get some jazz albums. I would go and hang out there and just stand around and listen to what people were saying. I learned about blues there, Mississippi John Hurt and so on. And I got some guitar lessons there.

On *Tequila*, Ron Carter was playing bass; and on that song, he plays one note for just about the whole thing. But it’s Ron Carter, so where he places things is great. I started to see his name on so many other things – he led me very soon to *Fuchsia Swing Song* which I also found among these cheap records – him on a Sam Rivers record with Tony Williams and Jaki Byard. And then to all the Miles stuff. And he was on a record with Kenny Burrell. It’s incredible the way everything joins up in music. I find so much comfort in that, especially now the world seems to be shredding apart – music is passed around and connects people. Even when musicians pass away, they still connect us – Wes Montgomery is in me, Wayne Shorter is in me, in all of us.

I always think the music reflects the person. What you are comes out in the music. When I play, I feel that’s my true voice – it’s me more than when I’m trying to talk now. But music is also a world where everything makes sense.

I feel almost guilty that I have the opportunity to live that, because when I’m in the music all the horror and insanity of the world goes away.

What I love is to never know what’s going to happen. When we [my trio] play, we don’t have a setlist. When we walked onstage last night, I didn’t know what song we were going to play. I had no idea. I played a couple of notes and thought, ‘Okay, let’s go there’, which turned out to be ‘Days Of Wine And Roses’. We’ve played that plenty of times, of course; but last night we played it in a tempo we’d never played it in before. It was just a way to get started. Then there’s the audience: if they’re willing to take a chance on not knowing where it’s going, then they become part of the whole experience. You can really feel that on stage and it’s wonderful.

I feel so lucky in so many ways. All along, I’ve had people who’ve been supportive, from my parents to friends and other musicians. It makes the difference. There’s enough doubt and insecurity, and I’ve definitely had moments of despair, especially early on, but someone would always encourage me. When I was young, I thought if I practise hard, I’ll figure everything out. Then you start to realise you can’t, and it can depress you. You have to realise that you just need to love trying to get there. It’s still that way now – what you haven’t done is infinite.

But that’s the truth of how amazing music is – you can’t finish it. I’m always inspired by Sonny Rollins – you hear him talk and it’s like he hardly knows how to play!

Bill Frisell’s new album *Orchestras* is out now on Blue Note

Wes Montgomery
Tequila
Verve (1966)
PERSONNEL: Wes Montgomery (g); Ron Carter (b); Ray Barretto (perc) and Grady Tate (d) plus string section.
TRACKS: ‘Tequila’, ‘Little Child’, ‘What The World Needs Now’, ‘The Big Hurt’, ‘Bumpin’ On Sunset’, ‘Insensatez’, ‘The Thumb’, ‘Midnight Mood’ and ‘Wives And Lovers’.

Photo: Matthew Septimus

Kathrine Windfeld Sextet

ALDEBARAN

CD: STUCD 23142 / LP: STULP 23141

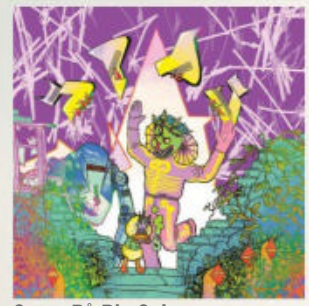
Kathrine Windfeld (p), Tomasz Dabrowski (tp), Hannes Bennich (as, ts), Marek Konarski (ts), Johannes Vaht (b), Henrik Holst Hansen (d).

Inger Marie Gundersen

FIVE MINUTES

CD: STUCD 23082 / LP: STULP 23081

Inger Marie Gundersen (voc), Espen Lind (g, keys, voc), Torjus Vierli (p, organ, keys), Tom Frode Tveita (b), Martin Windstad (d, perc), Kristian Frostad (steel g), Erlend Viken (vl), Tore Johansen (tp).



Smag På Dig Selv

SPDS

CD: STUCD 23142 / LP: STULP 23141

Oliver Lauridsen (ts), Thorbjørn Øllgaard (bs), Albert Holberg (d), Luna Ersahin (voc, saz).

Cornelia Nilsson

WHERE DO YOU GO

CD: STUCD 23092 / LP: STULP 23091

Aaron Parks (p), Gabor Bolla (ts), Daniel Franck (b), Cornelia Nilsson (d).

Alvin Queen Trio

FEELING GOOD

CD: STUCD 24042 / LP: STULP 24041

Carlton Holmes (p), Danton Boller (b), Alvin Queen (d).

Hanne Boel THE TRIO

NORWEGIAN RECORDINGS

CD: STUCD 24052 / LP: STULP 24051

Hanne Boel (voc), Jacob Funch (ac/el g, perc, voc), Jens Runge (ac g, voc and more).

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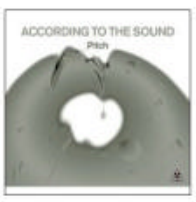
★★★★★ Landmark Recording ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Disappointing

According To The Sound
Pitch

Losen LOS2902 (CD, DL) ★★★

Adam Parry-Davies (p), Patrick Case (g, syn), Jim Barr (b), Gary Alesbrook, Nick Malcolm, David Adewumi, Mike Rodriguez (t), James Morton (as), Sam Shotaka, James Carter (ts), Jim Barr, Kaisa Mäensivu, Pasquale Votino (b), Otto Hashmi, Alex Hutchings (el b), Jared Schonig and Justin Brown (d).
Rec. date not stated



Although for obvious reasons remote recording took off during the pandemic, it is thankfully no longer the only option. But Birmingham's Parry-Davies and Bristol's Case have retained it as a working process on their third outing for the Losen label. The duo's method is to compose a huge number of tunes through improvisation, select the best of the bunch, then add Bristol-based musicians like Morton and Alesbrook, plus New Yorkers such as Carter and Rodriguez. The result is a kind of collage, in which the guests don't just play written parts but add their own compositional ideas.

There are moments of beauty, such as the Getz-like tenor intro to 'Matanzas Sun' and Parry-Davies' plangent keyboard excursions on 'Across the Water'. Elsewhere (eg, 'Set Peace') the horn interventions are often sweet and melodic, although occasionally misguided: in a studio it's easy to ask a musician to do another take, and to gently explain why it's needed. Remotely, however, communication is more difficult, and people can get the wrong end of the stick. The music can come across as directionless at times, but it's always strongly atmospheric and tuneful, and the added electronica keeps it sounding fresh. **Peter Jones**

Orlando le Fleming

Angus Bayley
Everything's Dangerous EP

Self-release (CD, DL) ★★★

Angus Bayley (p, ky, syn), Joshua Blackmore (d) and Julian Sartorius (perc). Rec. date not stated

There's a sense of testing the water on this debut release from keyboardist and conceptualist Angus Bayley. Fully fessing-up to his primary influences being defunct Brit proggers Troyka, their metal-edged contemporaries Three Trapped Tigers (it's their guitarist Matt Calvert on production duties here), and drummer Joshua Blackmore's solo electronica project, Strobes, it's perhaps no surprise that this synapse tickling five-track EP dazzles and bamboozles in equal measure.

The common denominator between these two primary sonic foundations is Blackmore, and it's his flexibile quicksilver beats and Terminator-esque virtuosity across an onslaught of odd-metered grooves that gives these labyrinthine tunes their jazz edge. Bayley's clearly a gifted pianist and his outside-the-box approach may well be thanks to his self-tutoring and lessons from pianist Richard Fairhurst alongside his training as both research scientist and computer programmer.

Yet for all his acknowledgment of his progressive forebears, Bayley's sound is a highly personal one. Opener 'Commission' rises from four repeated chords that expand into an Escher-like structure, synths and piano chasing each other down a series of overlapping musical staircases, drums in hot pursuit. 'Connect' slams with an aggressive rock-edged heaviness that's soon usurped by brief dreamy cinematic interludes, menacing textures adding haunting filmic ambiances. There's a nice twist to the meaning behind the title too, which (according to the press notes) implies that even leading a 'normal' risk-averse life could mean you're in danger of never really living. Whether Bayley is living his best life here is still in the balance – at least he's trying – either way, the journey so far is joyously maximalist, flawlessly executed and overflowing with ideas. **Mike Flynn**

Boreal Sun
Dawn

Bridge the Gap BTG188 (DL) ★★★★

Liselotte Östblom (v), Matt Roberts (p, t, flhn), Robin Mullarkey, Lewis Moody (syn), Gareth Lockrane (f), Emma Rawicz (ts), Raymond James Mason (tb), Jon Shenoy (as, bs, bcl), Billy Adamson (g), Christopher Hargreaves (el b), Joshua Blackmore (d), Yahael Camara Onono and Pedro Segundo (perc).
Rec. date not stated

This project is the work of two high-flying educators and practitioners of modern music: pianist Roberts and singer Östblom, who have penned the songs on this EP (with some help from Hargreaves and Mullarkey). It's as slick and sophisticated as one might hope, given the stated influences of Hancock, Shorter and the acid jazz movement of the 1990s, with all the rhythmic complexity that suggests.

Östblom describes what she does as 'futuristic soul', and there are obvious 'urban' elements

Chick Corea/Béla Fleck
Remembrance

Thirty Tigers 83830 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Chick Corea (p) and Béla Fleck (bjo). Rec. 2019

By the time a teenage banjoist called Béla Fleck had become entranced by Chick Corea's music in the 1970s, the piano star had already been anointed by Miles Davis, and become an emerging force in rock and Latin fusions with jazz. Fleck was a quarter-century older and a multi-Grammy-winning legend of bluegrass and a swathe of jazz, classical and global crossovers before the two finally played together in the 2000s. As the millennium turned, they began guesting on each other's projects, and by 2007, they had become an enthrallingly compatible duo.

After Corea's death in 2021, Fleck pondered some unreleased 2019 duo concert recordings, and sound files the pair had exchanged in the lockdowns, and *Remembrance* is his grateful and meticulous collation of that music. Corea's never-previously-released pieces 'Enut Nital' ('Latin tune' backwards) and 'Continuance' are garrulously conversational groovers and gracefully waltzing sways respectively, Fleck's 'The Otter Creek Incident' is an eager country-jive that turns bluesily funky, and 'Juno' (for the banjoist's son) is a playfully dancing invitation to call-and-response. Monk's 'Bemsha Swing' is an absolute barnstormer of blistering improv counterpoint in the head, turning to hurtling swing-comping and solo-swapping as it unfolds. Scarlatti gets a cameo role in some deliciously interwoven baroque pirou-ettes, and Fleck's jagged, zigzaggy 'Small Potatoes' hints at the sonically exploratory free-playing ingenuity Corea touched on with 1970-71's Circle, but which his mainstream acclaim never opened a path back to. Touching on all that ground, Béla Fleck's *Remembrance* is a unique document. **John Fordham**

Christie Dashiell
Journey in Black

Crehz Music (CD, DL) ★★★★

Christie Dashiell (v), Allyn Johnson (p), Shedrick Mitchell (org), Marquis Hill (t), Romeir Mendez (b) and Carroll 'CV' Dashiell III (d). Rec. date not stated

Born in Washington, DC and raised in Greenville, North Carolina, vocalist Christie Dashiell honed her skills at Howard University (where she now teaches) and the Manhattan School of Music. A recipient of *DownBeat* magazine's Best College Graduate Jazz Vocalist and Outstanding Soloist awards in the jazz vocal category, Dashiell possesses a sumptuously rich timbre, a powerful storytelling gift and the ability to craft songs which lodge immediately in the heart.

Her second album *Journey in Black* brings together seven fabulous originals and a brace of adroitly reimagined covers. The imposing album opener 'Ancestral Folk Song' begins with a thunderous, free time clarion call featuring the full band, followed by verse-chorus sections which vibrate between 5/4 and 6/4 time – and then the surprise, a beautiful, unforeseen spoken word coda accompanied by piano only ("There she lies, the glow of dusk on her face, as she dances through here and now"). Dashiell offers especially creative takes on 'Anyone Who Had a Heart', the 1963 hit song written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David for Dionne Warwick, and 'Invitation', a firm favourite of vocalists including Sarah Vaughan, Andy Bey and Patricia Barber and a tune also recorded by Coltrane on his 1958 album *Standard Coltrane*. On the entirely *a cappella* 'Always Stay', Dashiell delivers the plangent melodic line over four-part wordless textures that gently caress the ears, and she fashions further ear-catching vocal harmonies on 'The Things You Do', a track which is also graced by a crisply articulated muted trumpet solo from guest Marquis Hill. **Peter Quinn**

to the music too. And although 'boreal' refers to the sub-arctic, the production has more of a lush, tropical vibe.

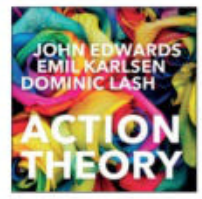
Östblom's smooth, multi-tracked vocals contribute much to the 'Rolls-Royce' feel of this EP. She is an extremely versatile performer, who was recently featured on Alex Hitchcock's live *Dream Band* album, while Roberts has worked with everyone from Dizzee Rascal to Jorja Smith.

Notable contributions are supplied by the stylish Billy Adamson (who appeared on Binker Golding's last album) on 'Horizon (Now Is the Time)', and Emma Rawicz, whose solo on 'Can We Take a Moment' provides further evidence of her rapid ascent into the upper echelons of UK jazz. **Peter Jones**

John Edwards/ Emil Karlsen/ Dominic Lash
Action Theory

Spoonhunt/Bandcamp (CD, DL) ★★★

John Edwards (b), Emil Karlsen (d) and Dominic Lash (el g). Rec. 9 January 2024



Dominic Lash is best known as an improvising double bassist with strong ties to the likes of Alexander Hawkins and Pat Thomas – but he has, of late, also developed a practice as an electric guitarist, as evidenced on this trio date released on his own Spoonhunt label. Here, double bass duties are handed over to hard-working doyen of UK improv, John Edwards, while drums are supplied by UK-based Norwegian drummer Emil Karlsen who has, in recent years, emerged as an in-demand improviser, working with John Butcher, Maggie Nicols and others.

It's perhaps unsurprising, then, that these five studio tracks – ranging from five to 14 minutes in length – sound very much like what we might call 'Classic British Improv'. Each piece is an information-rich journey full of lightning-swift interactions and rapidly changing moods, ranging from quiet, insectoid clatter to sudden irruptions of boiling energy. It's to Lash's credit that, within this context, he manages to avoid sounding overly indebted to Derek Bailey, often cranking the guitar way up into ecstatic overdrive with tight, rapid strumming that works particularly well with Edwards' lachrymose arco. Anyone who enjoys the sound of restlessly jangling nervous systems will surely find this 49 minutes well spent.

Daniel Spicer

Richard Fairhurst
Inside Out

Ubuntu UBU0161 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Richard Fairhurst (p) Dave Whitford (b) and Tim Giles (d). Rec. date not stated

Richard Fairhurst has an impressive pedigree. Five years after beginning to learn the piano at the age of 15, he was playing at Ronnie Scott's, and shortly afterwards he began winning awards for composition and performance. Since then he's recorded with Iain Ballamy, Jasper Høiby and Osian Roberts, as well as recording a piano duet album with John Taylor. His sidekicks on this, his first album in nine years, are longstanding collaborators - particularly drummer Tim Giles, with whom he began his career in the mid-1990s.

Fairhurst's style at the keys is austere but tuneful, for the most part. The compositions here are all his own, apart from two by his greatest influence, Carla Bley: the restless, questioning 'Vashkar', with its lengthy drum intro, and the jerky 'King Korn'. He isn't really a rhythm player, though, sounding at his most comfortable with the slow, cascading, rather mathematical 'Open Book', and 'Eclipse', with its spiralling chord progressions.

The music's default position is to meander restlessly around the keyboard without ever settling on anything that sounds resolved or even entirely finished. This is not necessarily a drawback - it's a style, not a fault, and there are many lovely passages. 'Uplift', for example is well titled, with its determined, surging melody, and the sweet-natured 'Farms' sounds anything but agricultural.

Throughout, Whitford and Giles support the piano with tightly interlocking grooves or punctuation marks as appropriate.

Peter Jones

Orlando le Fleming
Wandering Talk

Whirlwind WR4825 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Orlando le Fleming (el b, b) Philip Dizack (t), Nathaniel Facey (as), Tom Cawley (p, el p, syn) James Maddren (d), plus guests: Chris Martin and Nadia le Fleming (v). Rec. December 2023

British bassist-composer le Fleming and his Romantic Funk Band's 2020 release *The Unfamiliar* was an unexpectedly fresh and pulsating work, taking for its inspiration a mix of Miles Davis' late 1960s pre-plugged-in and 1980s synth-y fusion, Weather Report and other electric funk-jazz influences.

Le Fleming recently returned to dear old Blighty and as a consequence, this is a new British incarnation of his Romantic Funk band continuing with the work of his previous couple of albums yet, inevitably perhaps, with a perceptible shift in the group sound. *Wandering Talk* is less airy texturally than its predecessor, with a dreamier sonic world.

Charmingly so on 'Garden Shearing Blues' with pianist Tom Cawley's delicately eerie block chords recalling the late great George Shearing and le Fleming's acoustic walking bass and James Maddren's kit work really cookin' throughout. Indeed, le Fleming's bass playing and compositions are consistently top-notch on this album, and trumpeter Philip Dizack, the only surviving member of the previous New York-based line-up, is outstanding when called upon.

His playing is direct yet nuanced, and has a sustained singing quality, recalling the Bix tone in Miles' playing. On 'Tragic Magic' he weaves a compelling theme over Tom Cawley's Zawinul-ish astral synth pads. 'Repose', with its languorous Wayne Shorter-like theme anticipates their take on 'Plaza Real', a ballad written by Shorter from his time in Weather Report, and is just fine played pretty straight but with an epic climax that rings with passion.

The title track is a brief coda featuring a *bona fide* stadium pop superstar in Coldplay vocalist Chris Martin who's Le Fleming's old school chum. Against type however, Martin delivers a plain yet soothingly affecting vocal, reciting a few verses of Rumi's Sufi-inspired poetry. **Selwyn Harris**

John Escreet
The Epicenter of Your Dreams

Blue Room Music (CD, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

John Escreet (p), Mark Turner (ts), Eric Revis (b) and Damion Reid (d). Rec. date not stated

John Escreet's latest album, a sax-and-rhythm quartet, balances trenchant acoustic modernism with the avant-garde and conjures strong emotions with angular musical shapes. Saxophonist Mark Turner is on board, and the rhythm section is the same one that made Escreet's recent piano trio album, *Seismic Shift*, such a success. Bassist Eric Revis, long-term mainstay of the Branford Marsalis Quartet and drummer Damion Reid, whose multiple credits range from Steve Coleman to the Robert Glasper Trio, embellish and underpin each rhythmic twist. Turner, playing with harder-than-usual edge, dives into the rhythmic intrigue and solos with vigour.

The album opens with 'Call it What it Is', a blast of contemporary jazz references which opens with serrated lines and rumbles to a peak. The title track comes next, a mix of modal left-hand chords, twinkling piano abstractions and

elegiac tenor sax. And then the driving walking bass swing of Stanley Cowell's 'Departure No 1', one of two covers in this intriguing set, is followed by the sonic abstractions and rhythmic breakdowns of 'Meltdown'.

Stylistic range confirmed, the quartet purposefully romp through a rich narrative landscape. Turner's wispy rounded tone contrasts with Escreet's resonant piano voice and Revis' steady acoustic bass balances drummer Reid's fractured rolls and whip-crack time-bendy beats. Three Escreet originals deliver sharp-angled themes, tense interplay and solos that really count. In contrast, 'Erato', written by the late Andrew Hill, unfolds at a gorgeous mid-tempo lope.

Mike Hobart

Flukten
Flukten

Odin ODINCD/LP 9583 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Hanna Paulsberg (ts), Marius Klovning (g), Bárður R Poulson (b) and Hans Hulbækmo (d). Rec 24 February, 8-9 May, 22 September 2023

This is the second album from the Norwegian quartet, dominated by the compositions of drummer Hans Hulbækmo. Flukten's other well-known member is saxophonist Hanna Paulsberg, with much of this band's character stemming from her intimate entwining with Marius Klovning's guitar. Bassist Bárður R Poulson arrives from the Faroe Islands. His bowed bass leads a tender opening, tenor lines enquiring, but soon awakening into a firmly circulating theme. Paulsberg has a real bite to her sound, almost rigidly pushy, getting into a wandering solo, with overblowing edges. Hulbækmo urges her on, maintaining a rolling and complex splash-pattern. Freedom jostles with returning motifs.

The first five tracks are studio-recorded, but harness a strong collective energy. Catchy themes abound here, restless and intricate, but without losing a spontaneous feel. 'Abundans' is gentle and luminous, so enter some quivering reed-vibrato. Klovning is versatile, going from almost-heavy to a lighter, dappled touch. Paulson plumbs for a deeper grain when bowing, while tenor and guitar prick around the edges, as Hulbækmo solos loose-limbed, skins and small objects vibrating. Paulsberg works on an angular progression, with halting notes, building intensity while Hulbækmo beavers around. Judging by the album's last three live tracks it would be great to catch this combo onstage.

Martin Longley

Jo Harrop
The Path of a Tear

Lateralize Records LZ20.2 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Jo Harrop (v), Anthony Wilson (g), Jim Cox (el p, org), David Piltch, Larry Klein (b) and Victor Indrizzo (d). Rec. September 2023

Iggy Pop has declared that Jo Harrop is a fine jazz singer, and she won Jazz Album of the Year at the Parliamentary Jazz Awards for *When Winter Turns to Spring* last year. Larry Klein, four-time Grammy winner for his production work with Joni Mitchell and Herbie Hancock, among a whole host of other top-line performers, was sufficiently impressed when he heard Harrop sing to want to produce her album. What more do you need to know?

This new, soulfully resonant disc was recorded in Los Angeles last September and finds Harrop on fine form. Her voice has an irresistible smoky quality and intimate charm, and her selection of covers (here, 'If It Wasn't For Bad' by Elton John and Leon Russell, 'Goodbye' by Steve Earle, and, most stirringly, 'Traveling Light' from Leonard Cohen's final album) is matched by some very distinguished original songwriting: opener 'Beautiful Fools' was a good choice for a single, 'Whiskey or the Truth' swells then totters engagingly down a bluesy path you'll want to follow, while 'Hurt' doesn't waste a note in evoking the shattering power of love. A treat. **Robert Shore**

Jo Harrop

Jasper Høiby 3Elements
Like Water

Edition Records EDN1243 ★★★ (CD, LP, DL)

Jasper Høiby (b), Chaerin Im (p) and Jamie Peet (d). Rec. 2023

Jasper Høiby's 3Elements is a project, rather than a band as such, and *Like Water* is its second album following 2023's *Earthness*. While those titles connotate the 'elemental' theme, the band name primarily refers to Høiby's fascination with exploring the three components of a piano trio.

This latest threesome draws on the Amsterdam scene where both South Korean pianist Chaerin Im and Dutch drummer Jamie Peet are prominent improvisatory players. They are strong characters, as you need to be around Høiby's incomparably ear-catching sound, and they prove well able to stick with his often demanding compositions and arrangements.

Despite the new personnel, the overall sound will be familiar to anyone recalling Høiby's previous trio projects like Phronesis or Plan B though the music never reaches the frenetic heights of the former. Interestingly there is a return to Plan B number 'What It Means To Be Human', a lovely balanced piece, with Im's gently controlled and plangent piano harmonically enlarging on Josh Arcoleo's original saxophone role.

Elsewhere she is assertive, almost angry on 'Illusion of Choice' with its fearsomely headlong bass/piano unison, while more controlled on the fluent grooves of the title track. Drummer Peet provides energy throughout, albeit frequently restrained, but his solo opening to 'Reciprocity' allows him a rare moment of flamboyance, eagerly taken. Interestingly there is one brief burst of freedom on the album - the snippet track 'Free Souls' – that hints at another direction this trio could pursue if they chose. But, as Høiby has already stated that he will re-recruit for his next 3Elements album that possibility may have to wait. **Tony Benjamin**

The Jazz Defenders

Memory In Motion

Haggis Records HRLP008 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

George Cooper (p, org, vb, perc), Jake McMurchie (ts), Nick Malcolm (t), Will Harris (b) and Ian Matthews (d). Rec. date not stated

The brainchild of pianist/organist George Cooper, the Bristol-based Jazz Defenders claim that they are 'defending the spirit of hard bop jazz', as personified by the likes of Horace Silver, Lee Morgan and Art Blakey. That's an endeavour which will win plaudits from thousands of jazz lovers up and down the land, but Cooper and company are no tribute act churning out yet another cover of 'The Sidewinder' or 'Song For My Father' – they channel that hard bop spirit by playing all-original material. Some feat, especially as that material (mostly written by Cooper) is of real quality: catchy, energetic with top-notch arrangements and fine soloing from all the players.

The opening 'Meanderthal' sets the scene for the next 40 minutes, getting proceedings off to a suitably funky start with swinging drums and a deliciously Morganesque trumpet solo; 'Snakebite Playfight' has a soulful Freddie Hubbard vibe; 'Chasing Fantasies' swings majestically, giving the band space to cut loose on some smoking solos; the bubbling, shuffling 'Fuffle Kerfuffle' recalls Blakey at his best; there's even a hip-hop/jazz dancefloor banger, 'Rolling On A High' and a jazz fusion jam, the footstompingly hyper-funky 'Net Zero' which, at under four minutes, never outstays its welcome.

But Cooper and company also know how to mix up the mood and tempo. Thus 'Take A Minute' adopts a lazy, rolling groove overlaid with horn and vibes embellishments, the result sounding like the soundtrack to an imaginary late 1960s trippy film. However, the biggest surprise (and perhaps the single best moment on the album) is saved until last: 'Enigma', recorded live in Paris features just Cooper on piano and Harris on double bass. It's a poignant, introspective piece that recalls Bill Evans at his most romantically lush and is the perfect way to end a near-perfect album.

A deeply statisfying jazz treat.

Kevin Whitlock

Album Interview

Magnus Öström & Dan Berglund

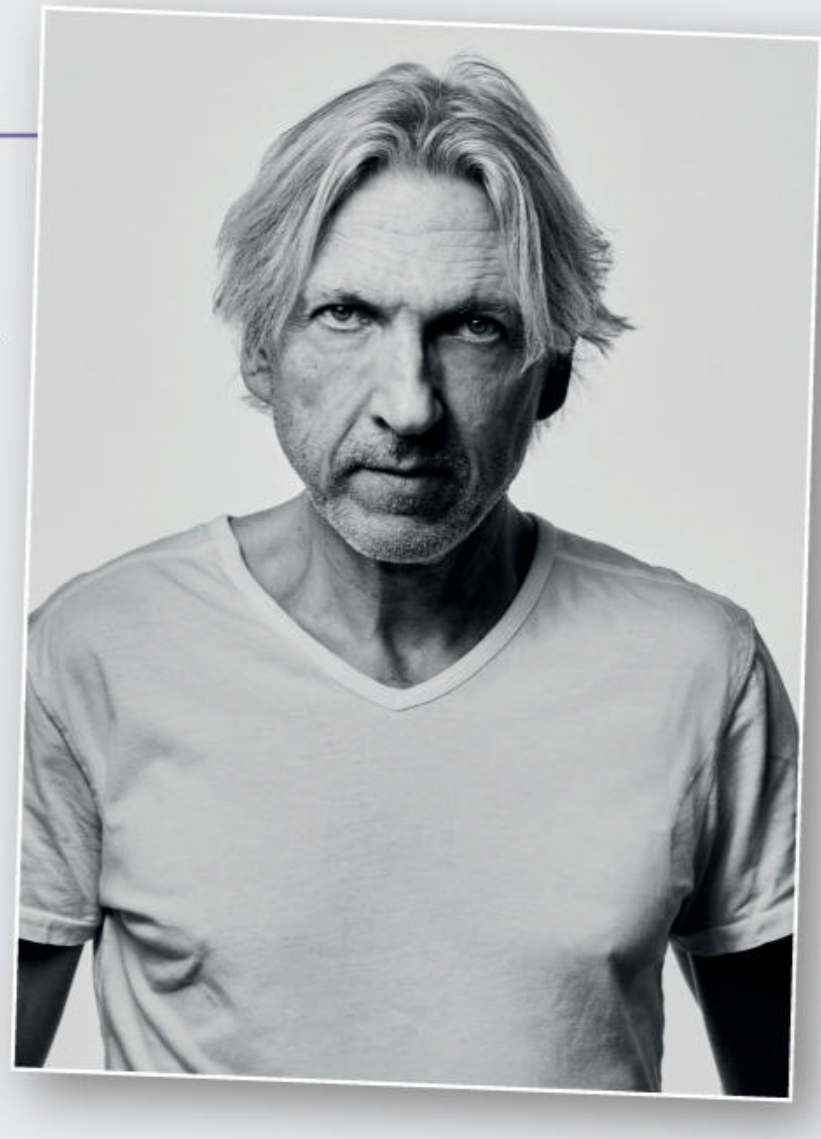
e.s.t. 30

ACT Music ACT9987 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Magnus Öström (d), Dan Berglund (b), Verneri Pohjola (t), Magnus Lindgren (ts), Joel Lyssarides (p) and Ulf Wakenius (g). Rec. 14 October 2023

Thirty years after the formation of e.s.t., Öström and Berglund have assembled this all-star cast to celebrate the music of that groundbreaking trio. It is easy to think of Esbjörn Svensson's compositions as the collective voice of the trio, rather than autonomous compositions in their own right. But as early as 2004, Viktoria Tolstoy recorded an album of Svensson songs (*Shining on You)*, which demonstrated that his songs had a life of their own away from the trio.

These six instrumentals, recorded live at the Kölner Philharmonie in Germany last October, include compositions such as 'From Gagarin's Point of View', 'Tuesday Wonderland', 'Seven Days of Falling' and 'Eighthundred Streets by Feet', sound as fresh and new in their present-day surroundings, complete with well-conceived arrangements that add to the inherent characteristics of the compositions, which also prompt exceptionally strong improvisations from the band members, Ulf Wakenius especially reminding us what an impressive guitarist he is. **Stuart Nicholson**



Stuart Nicholson speaks to drummer Magnus Öström about the album:

Joel Lyssarides on piano is a revelation and no doubt could have done a great job as a 'trio' celebration at 30, so how did the concept of adding Ulf, Magnus L, and Verneri come about?

When we started to think about the 30 years anniversary both Dan and I thought it would be good to go beyond the trio format. We didn't just want to repeat what we already had done, though as you say, it would have been very easy to do it just with Joel, who is a great musician with a beautiful touch in the vein of Esbjörn's. Then ACT approached us asking if we wanted to do something together, and as the guest musicians are all super great musicians and also friends it wasn't a difficult choice! We were very happy when all of them wanted to join us, and we are of course super happy with what they have contributed to the project, with such fantastic playing and positive energy.

It's really good to hear Esbjörn's compositions beyond a trio format – I think we all tend to think of them as the collective expression of the trio, rather than music in its own right, which the sextet demonstrate...

Yes, I think so too. Esbjörn's compositions are great songs, period, so they will sound great whatever setting you put them in, but with both me and Dan still here adding our sound and approach from e.s.t. you might have something good from both worlds.

How did the arrangements come together as they seem a natural extension of the smaller group concept?

It was all very natural. Both me and Dan thought, why complicate things and change a lot, the songs are so strong in themselves and I think the sound and the personal expression of our guest musicians give enough new colours to the compositions. We also have given them certain feature songs each, all the way from the piano trio format up to the whole group, and Magnus and Verneri developed head arrangements during the rehearsals.

From what I understand, you have played two engagements live: are there plans to go beyond this as this is such a beautifully balanced and original sounding ensemble with such wonderful soloists?

Thank you! First we thought that these two shows would be it, but we had so much fun so it felt stupid to not take it further. And we also got some requests so this summer we will play Jazz Baltica in Germany, Garana Jazz Festival in Romania and Ystad Jazz Festival in Sweden. In the Autumn we will be at Leverkusener Jazztage in Germany. Now me and Dan now have revisited the music again after all these years, we both feel that these songs are too good to be lying around in a drawer, they should be played! And after seeing and feeling the reaction from the audiences it seems there are more people thinking the same. It also feels good in our hearts to keep Esbjörn's and e.s.t.'s legacy alive. We are so grateful for the super-warm reception we have got so far!

Malcolm Jiyane Tree-O

Malcolm Jiyane Tree-O
True Story

Mushroom Hour Half Hour/New Soil
NS0069 (CD, LP, DL) ★★

Malcolm Jiyane Tree-O (tb, ky, v), Ayanda Zalekile (el b, recorder, v), Dion Monti (ky, syn), Dumama, Nosisi Ngakane (v), Gontse Makene (perc), Lungile Kunene (d) and Nkosinathi Mathunjwa (p, ky). Rec. 2023

In the past decade Mushroom Hour Half Hour has emerged as a key label in South African music, and this release by trombonist Malcolm Jiyane Tree-O is an interesting, if uneven, addition to the label's catalogue.

There are certainly moments of pleasing invention, such as the excellent 'Dr. Philip Tabane', which has a wistful combination of brass, string synthesizer and wordless vocals hovering over a child-like recorder motif that makes the arrangement both celestial and rural, a kind of folk futurism.

The album as a whole is meditative if not mournful, with chants and electronics creating atmospheres that are not unattractive. However, around the half way mark the composing starts to wane. Tree-O uses relatively spare harmony in most of the material, which would benefit from richer melodic content. And that doesn't really come on tracks that lack sufficient ideas to justify their extended running time. Despite the high standard of engineering and mixing on the set, the appealing kernels of ideas have not grown enough to fully achieve the artist's quite obvious potential. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Sean Khan Presents the Modern Jazz and Folk Ensemble
Volume 1

Acid Jazz Records AJXCD/LP774
(CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Sean Khan (ss, fl), Andy Noble (p, ky), Mirko Scarcia (b), Laurie Lowe (d) with Rosie Frater-Taylor, Jacqui McShee, Kindelan (v), Dave Pegg (b), Gerry Diver, Miya Vaisanen, Max Baillie (vn), Rachel Robson (vla) and Danny Keane (clo). Rec. date not stated

Jazz and folk have always danced together, and Khan celebrates that alliance with a special focus on great singer-songwriters of the late 1960s and 70s. Two Nick Drake songs are covered, 'Parasite' and 'Things Behind the Sun', both from 1972's seminal *Pink Moon*, and two are celebrations of the troubled troubadour, John Martyn's darkly insightful 'Solid Air' and Khan's own 'Ode to Nick Drake', with none other than Dave Pegg guesting.

Frater-Taylor's take on 'zoleedaire' as Martyn slurred it, is excellent. Sung in a deeper register than she usually employs, she brings her own fragility to the song, while Khan's sax nods to but never attempts to replicate Tony Coe. The joyful heart of the release is hearing Jacqui McShee on 'Light Flight' and 'I've Got A Feeling' done in a swinging Miles modal frame. Pentangle, taking up Davey Graham's torch, were of course the doyens of folk/jazz royalty and to hear McShee (who like Danny Thompson is still on the scene) alongside new voices such as Kindelan is an utter pleasure.

Let's not be maudlin, asking 'Who Knows Where the Time Goes?' (covered by Khan in Coltrane 'My Favourite Things' mode) but celebrate instead that the time is now, the music is now, and very good it is too. **Andy Robson**

Kiefer Trio
Something For Real

Stones Throw/Bandcamp (DL/LP)
★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Kiefer (el p, syn), Pera Krstajic (el b) and Luke Titus (d). Rec. April 2023

When the buzz first started to build around LA-based keyboardist Kiefer *circa* 2017, it was thanks to his raw self-produced albums that set his earworm tunes and hypnotic piano loops against subtly off-kilter beats and synth bass in a sub-genre that's now more widely known as 'lofi'.

While this has now started to become a parody of itself, Kiefer has done the smart thing and hit the road across the US, Europe and UK with his punchy trio (and quartet) and not just rewarded his sizeable fanbase with a far more visceral experience but also revealed he's a masterful keys player with a signature sound, not just a one-trick home producer.

Kiefer (wisely) didn't tell his bandmates Krstajic and Titus that this particular gig in LA was being recorded, and *Something For Real* successfully bottles an unfettered performance fuelled by the band's white-hot chemistry. Here it's the Rhodes that's the keyboardist's primary voice with occasional synth sounds picking out the drunkenly-timed theme of opener 'Cute'. Young drum hero Titus really impresses with his modern mash-up of jazz technique and ferocious drum'n'bass, rock and hip hop beats, with some Dennis Chambers-style polyrhythms thrown in for good measure.

With such a strong rhythm team holding down the ever-shifting grooves, Kiefer solos tastefully, stretching out on the slow-burning gospel-tinged title track to construct a hymn-like solo before the layers of chords allow Titus to drive the tune home. It's Kiefer's easy-going authenticity and commanding playing, coupled to his dynamite rhythm section, that seals this hugely enjoyable live set. It makes you wish you'd been in the room too. **Mike Flynn**

The Jakub Klimiuk Quintet
(un)balanced

Self-release/Bandcamp (CD, DL) ★★

Jakub Klimiuk (el g), Simeon May (ts, bcl), Cody Moss (p), Harry Pearce (b), Adam Merrell (d) and Mark Lockheart (ts).
Rec. 21–22 September 2023

Jakub Klimiuk is a Polish guitarist, now living in London, drawing his own band of locals into his compositional world. Klimiuk's glaring disadvantage to many listeners will be his somewhat bland guitar style and sound. The rest of the band actually exude a reasonable degree of toughness, even if that edge is still quite soft. Reedsman Simeon May frequently provides textural interest, with his rich-burr solos.

Klimiuk's melodies are open and optimistic, with a calmly cerebral nature. 'Absence Of Colour' is a relaxed drifter, topped by a wiry, supple tenor solo from May, with the leader wisely allowing ample soloing space for his crew. Next, there's an articulate, sprung-string bass solo from Pearce. Mark Lockheart guests on one track (technically two, but the other is one of the scattered mini-studies that act as preludes to full pieces), and the pairing of his tenor with May's bass clarinet proves illuminating. The final run consists of three tunes that drift into the distance, creating a soft ending without a climax.

Klimiuk sounds better when soloing than when negotiating his mellow themes, sometimes turning up the mild distortion-frosting dial, his picking preferable to his diaphanous strumming. **Martin Longley**

Sean Khan

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Jake Long
City Swamp

New Soil NS0054 (CD, LP, DL) ★★

Jake Long (d), Nubya Garcia, Binker Golding, Tamar Osborn (s, bcl), Shirley Tetteh, Artie Zaitz (g), Amané Suganami, Al MacSween (ky), Twm Dylan (b) and Tim Doyle (perc). Rec. 2023

Jake Long was the mastermind behind Maisha, one of the best bands to emerge out of the 'new London jazz scene' in the mid-2010s. The debut Maisha album came out on Brownswood in 2018 to widespread acclaim and they went on to tour and record with Gary Bartz in 2020, but Long has kept busy since then playing for a variety of other hip cats, like Oscar Jerome and Snapped Ankles.

This is his debut under his own name, but as it includes all the original Maisha line-up plus some subsequent additions, it's easy to see it as a continuation, but harder to see it as a progression. The sound is heavier: Twm Dylan's deep, fluent bass grooves have an almost dub-style relentlessness and Long emphasises the backbeats throughout. We are presented with four long jam-style wig-outs: rather as though wading our way through an interminably verdant tropical forest, we are surrounded by swarming percussion, entangled in thickets of organ and electric piano, periodically soaked in analogue delays, stalked by prowling guitar solos, lost in a landscape at once rich *and* monotonous.

'Ideological Rubble' introduces the twin saxes of dream team Binker and Nubya with initial promise but uncertain outcome: 'Swamp' has a rock-bluesy riff that wouldn't sound out of place on a Cream album: 'Celestial Soup' has a more afro-beat-ish cadence, and 'Silhouette' has some beautifully mellifluous saxophone, and the most memorable melodic head of the record - the edited single version is the most satisfying cut here. Fans of head-nodding jams will appreciate the skill and subtlety with which Long and Dylan maintain and extend the grooves, and may well wish that the tracks were longer - others may feel that some stronger writing, tighter editing and a clearer sense of purpose might have added, rather than detracted, from the overall impact. **Eddie Myer**

Zara McFarlane
Sweet Whispers: Celebrating Sarah Vaughan

Eternal Source Of Light ESOCD/LP4 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Zara McFarlane (v), Giacomo Smith (cl, ss), Gabriella Swallow (clo), Joe Webb (p), Ferg Ireland (b), Jas Kayser (d) and Marlon Hibbert (steel pan). Rec. date not stated

In the world of vocal jazz, few names command as much reverence as Sarah Vaughan. Known as the 'Divine One', Vaughan's incomparable artistry and pioneering spirit have inspired generations of singers, including the multi-award-winning singer-songwriter, Zara McFarlane. To celebrate the centenary of Vaughan's birth, McFarlane pays tribute to her musical muse with *Sweet Whispers: Celebrating Sarah Vaughan*, a captivating album that breathes new life into some of the timeless songs that defined Vaughan's illustrious career.

From a swinging 'Tenderly', Vaughan's first solo hit, to the sublime tenderness of 'September Song' (from the classic 1955 album *Sarah Vaughan with Clifford Brown*), McFarlane's silken timbre and emotional depth shines new light on this beloved repertoire.

McFarlane's self-proclaimed favourite Vaughan song, 'Mean to Me', is imbued with soulful expression, while the breakneck pace of 'Great Day' showcases her impeccable time feel. There's also a superb interpretation of 'Obsession' from Vaughan's final studio album, *Brazilian Romance*. McFarlane's sonic love letter extends beyond Vaughan's celebrated discography – the album's title track, the touching and hymn-like ballad 'Sweet Whispers', is an original composition inspired by Vaughan's own words. Elsewhere, McFarlane's passionate vocal sweeps and soars on 'The Mystery of Man', brilliantly arranged by Giacomo Smith.

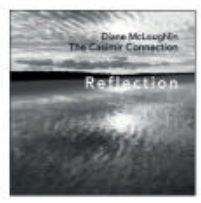
An inspired and lovingly crafted homage. **Peter Quinn**

Sam Newbould

Diane McLoughlin & The Casimir Connection
Reflection

Caliban Sounds CAL006 (CD, DL) ★★★

Diane McLoughlin (as, ss, p), Alcyona Mick (p), Kit Massey (vn, vla) and Tim Fairhall (b). Rec. date not stated



"In physics, the Casimir Effect is an electromagnetic energy drawing elements together," explains Diane McLoughlin, leader of The Casimir Connection. "I thought it was an interesting metaphor for those magical moments in music performance."

On their second album, the ensemble, positioned musically at the intersection of jazz, classical and folk, achieve plenty of connections. Given the constellation of instruments and the album title, you might expect a work of cool introspection, but *Reflection*, co-produced with Penny Rimbaud (among other things in a long and storied career, co-founder of the anarchist punk group Crass), is not quite that. There's no percussion here, but the contemplative stillness and silence this creates space for isn't necessarily always relaxed.

McLoughlin, who also plays saxophone with Alison Rayner's band, has worked as a mental health counsellor and says: "In my sessions, I was often struck by the power of silence. Silence is a difficult place to be, but it is where you can find deeper understanding and a deeper level of experience". This was part of the rationale for not having percussion, she explains. "Although I love the rhythmic drive and textures of percussion, in this context I chose not to include it because I wanted those moments of silence in the performance, even though they may feel uncomfortable".

On 'A Difficult Conversation', the quartet even grapples noisily and restlessly with some awkward emotional material. But there's also serenity and optimism here too – and all delivered with virtuosic commitment. **Robert Shore**

Fergus McCreadie
Stream

Edition EDN1228 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Fergus McCreadie (p), David Bowden (b) and Stephen Henderson (d). Rec. date not stated

Fergus McCreadie continues his explorative evocation of Scotland in this latest release. If his 2018 debut *Turas* was a general invitation, subsequent editions have narrowed and deepened the field.

In 2021 *Cairn* led us out to roam the Hebridean coast; the following year, *Forest Floor* guided us into the wooded hinterlands. Now *Stream* invites us to consider the lochs and burns that crisscross his native land. As ever, he's accompanied by his constant companions David Bowden and Stephen Henderson, and their playing is as sympathetic, as supportive, as flexible and as accurate as we've come to expect.

There are the now-familiar Celtic inflections, but McCreadie is careful not to overdo them or

to allow the occasional pensive prettiness of a landscape-based programmatic approach to overwhelm: "The Crossing" is a tour de force that moves from the pastoral to a Jarrett-like frenzy that reminds us that McCreadie has the formidable chops and driving emotional intensity to back up his vision.

'Storm' is an excursion into non-pulse time that still maintains the lyrical character; 'Driftwood' wears its Traditional heart more openly on its sleeve; and 'Sun Pillar' hints at Jarrett again, but this time in his pastoral/gospel mood. There's evidence throughout in the carefully crafted arrangements and considered programming of how seriously McCreadie takes his music: if there's no immediate evidence of a progression from his fully-formed debut, he has accomplished that rare thing – a very distinctive voice that's immediately recognisable.

The recurrent harmonic simplicity and melodious lilt of tunes like 'Stony Gate' will not be for everyone but no-one can deny the commitment of the vision, nor the passion of its execution. **Eddie Myer**

Laura Misch
Sample The Earth

One Little Independent Records TPLP1856 (LP, DL) ★★★

Laura Misch (v, as), Marysia Osu (hp, p), Tomáš Kašpar (g, b), Emma Barnaby (vc), Sian O'Gorman (bv), Polly Misch (bv) and Oli Barton Wood (space echo). Rec. February 2024

In 2023, Laura Misch released her debut album *Sample The Sky*, a nature-inspired oeuvre of leftfield pop electronica. Her close follow-up, *Sample The Earth*, is a reworking of her first album, but while the songs and themes remain the same, the sound has most definitely changed. In *Sample The Earth*, the London-based saxophonist, singer and producer channels a more raw, acoustic sound in line with her core inspiration - the natural environment.

Casting aside electronic beats in favour of drumless arrangements, the mood is plaintive and melancholic, with a focus on Misch's vocals, which are warm and enveloping. Between sparingly-played sax lines, her lyrics conjure up forests, oceans, and open skies.

Misch's instrumental collaborators also shine through, from Marysia Osu's wistful harp playing in 'Portals Into Outer Edges (Regrown)' to Emma Barnaby's drone-like cello strokes in 'Listen To The Sky (Regrown)'. The album was recorded live at Premises Studios in front of an audience of close friends. This intimacy is felt through all nine tracks, forming an offering of closeness and connection to our very-present, but often forgotten, natural world. **Gail Tasker**

Sam Newbould
Homing

ZenneZ Records ZR2024033/011 CD, ZR2024033 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Sam Newbould (as, cl, v), Bernard van Rossum (ts), Xavi Torres (p), Jort Terwijn (b), Guy Salamon (d) and Beth Aggett (v). Rec. 3–5 October 2023

Ooh, if you hear a sweeter earworm than the theme to 'Barba Tenus Sapientes' slip it my way. For those who know their Latin, Newbould is rather more talented than simply his beard (though it is a mighty luxuriant one): he has a talent for writing what may appear insouciant songs, but there's a spacious confidence in the arrangements, a trust in the magic touch of his band, notably Torres' understated piano, that turns them into gentle giants of melody and rich harmony.

So 'Barba...' grows upon you like a many layered Zawinul/Shorter song. By contrast, 'Little Boy Ghost' is so intimate (with a gorgeous Torres intro) we feel we are eavesdropping upon something deeper than tears. But then he'll charm you with 'Odd Jobs' or veer left into the urgent vistas of 'Believe You Me.'

There's a sense of consideration in Newbould's music, a due value placed on each note and phrase that invites us to pay due diligence to his wryly subversive material. Newbould the composer is homing in on something special. Listen up. **Andy Robson**

David Murray
Francesca

Intakt CD422 (CD, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

David Murray (ts), Marta Sanchez (p), Luke Stewart (b) and Russell Carter (d). Rec. 26-27 November 2023

At Kahil El Z Bar's concert at the Flagey Jazz Festival in Brussels at the start of the year, David Murray was an illustrious special guest. He played with such impassioned brilliance that anybody of the opinion that he was not as relevant to the contemporary scene as he was in his 1980s heyday would have had to think again. This fine new album with an excellent quartet comprising younger players finds him on stellar form, making the perhaps overlooked point that the 69-year-old saxophonist has always been a strong composer as well as improviser.

Here the melodies are alternately joyous and romantic, keeping alive the flame of swing era heroes Don Byas and Ben Webster, particularly on the tunes in which a 4/4 beat has a subtle strain of dance. Yet Murray has always had a clear allegiance to the avant-garde, and the tonal vigour and acrobatic intervallic leaps of his lines on tenor and bass clarinet lend an incendiary energy to songs that achieve the all too rare feat of being simultaneously soothing and discomfiting. In the refined, careful pianist Marta Sanchez, supple bassist Luke Stewart and impactful drummer Russell Carter Murray has an ensemble to match the notable past iterations of his quartet (think John Hicks, Ray Drummond and Idris Muhammad). Murray may be defined by classic albums such as *Home* and *Ming* but this new work shows that he has lost none of his verve today, firmly taking his place among the elite group of musicians whose output has quality to match quantity. **Kevin Le Gendre**

New Regency Orchestra
New Regency Orchestra

Mr Bongo MRBCD/LP307 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Eliane Correa (MD, ky), Jose Cesar (v), Jack Banjo Courtney, Rolando Domingo, Eikel Venegas, Nick Walters (t), Joe Bristow, Landy Diaz, Justin Thurgur (tb), Frank Portuondo (b, tres), Alexa Nava, Chris Williams (as), George Crowley, Josephine Davies (ts), Tamar Osborn (bs), Flavio Correa, Will Fry (perc), Ernesto Marichales (timbales) plus Wonky Logic (b), Maddy Coombs (ts) and various guests. Rec. August 2023 - January 2024

NRO is an 18-piece Afro-Cuban big band with a vibe straight out of the Nuyorican barrios and a repertoire variously inspired by the golden era of big bands - think Dizzy and Bird sitting in with Machito or Mario Bauza - in residence at NYC clubs like the Palladium, and by the Fania Records label with its trombone-heavy salsa orchestras. Oh, and by the cross-cultural percolation of London, where NRO formed in 2021 under the aegis of Lex Blondin, a French-born promoter, DJ, crate digger and Latin music aficionado who saw a gap in the 21st century music market and set about filling it.

The project feels like a logical next step for Blondin, whose founding of the Total Refreshment Centre in Dalston, was pivotal to the evolution of the so-called 'Young British Jazz Scene'. Here a line-up including the fast rising likes of Maddy Coombs team with the seasoned likes of Eliane Correa and José Cesar, whose sweetly powerful vocals match the wall of horns and dazzling polyrhythms woven by timbales, bata and conga drums; the improv passages, sparkling call-and-response and always danceable grooves are irresistable.

Classic tracks including Chico O'Farrill's 'Pregon', Kenny Graham's 'Mango Walk' and Tito Puente's 'Mambo Rama' are infused with new influences and attitude, reworked with new arrangements. Supercharged sounds from the best retro-futuristic Latin juggernaut in town. **Jane Cornwell**

Parlor Greens

Tamar Osborn/ Yohannes Kebede/ Will Glaser
44:42

Red Dust/Bandcamp (LP, DL) ★★★★

Tamar Osborn (f, cl, bs), Yohannes Kebede (ky) and Will Glaser (d). Rec. 9 September 2021

44:42 begins like a scene from a Noh play. Sharp bursts of flute, frantic yet spaced out, spar with off-kilter drums. The tension builds, a cluster of synth chords cascade into rhythm, and minutes later we're in a Western. The transition is electrifying, an outcome of absolute spontaneity and masterful musicianship in front of a live audience.

The band is comprised of Tamar Osborn on wind instruments, Yohannes Kebede on keyboards, and Will Glaser on drums; all three are London-based, but this is their first time performing together.

It's perhaps owing to the fact that these musicians are all from slightly different, yet overlapping, music scenes, that two sides of semi-free improvisation can sound so consistently fresh. Afrobeat patterns break down into cosmic cinematic psych, before heading through electronica realms into free jazz dissonance.

The record is the first to come from Moment's Notice, an event series curated by George Nelson and held at Amp Studios in London. It is thanks to Nelson and his new label Red Dust that the magic of this one-off collaboration has been captured, preserved, and made available in high-quality audio for many more to enjoy. **Gail Tasker**

Sara Oschlag
Yeah!

Self-release/Bandcamp (CD, DL) ★★★★

Sara Oschlag (v), Jason Henson (g), Alan Barnes (cl, as, ts), Mark Edwards (p, ky), Arnie Somogyi (b, el b) and Darren Beckett (d, perc). Rec. 2023

Bookended by the magnificent compositions of Charles Mingus, this 10-track album from vocalist Sara Oschlag is a *tour de force* that pays homage to the greats while asserting Oschlag's singular voice. It opens with a swagger, with Oschlag appending new lyrics to 'Mingus Fingers' – here retitled 'Here comes Mingus! (Mingus Fingers)' – and closes with one of the great eulogistic masterpieces, 'Duke Ellington's Sound Of Love', which is given a gorgeous reading here by Oschlag.

The singer's interpretation of 'Lazy Afternoon', the Jerome Moross and John Le Touche classic from the 1954 musical *The Golden Apple*, is a highlight, her languid delivery painting vivid scenes and Edwards' shimmering Hammond organ providing a heat-hazed backdrop. Oschlag's rhythmic flexibility shines on 'East Of The Sun', the Brooks Bowman standard first recorded in 1934, while 'Some of My Best Friends Are The Blues' showcases her ability to imbue familiar tunes with newfound vitality. The album's varied moods and textures are a constant delight, from the enchanting, lush arrangement of 'I'm Glad There Is You' with its trilling clarinet and tinkling glockenspiel, to the soulfully swinging take on Horace Silver's 'Summer In Central Park Thrill' (again featuring new lyrics by Oschlag) and the energising blast of 'The Song Is You'.

Recorded at Eastbourne's Echo Zoo Studios by David Lynch and beautifully mixed and produced, the album is a testament not only to Oschlag's artistry but also to the enduring power of the human voice to move, inspire, and transport us to realms of pure emotion. **Peter Quinn**

Parlor Greens
In Green We Dream

Colemine Records CLMN12062 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Adam Scone (org), Jimmy James (g) and Tim Carman (d). Rec. April 2023

Dig out those saddle shoes, you're going dancing. It all started with a jam, like the best music always does, with these three vets of the jazz, soul and R&B scenes getting down in the Colemine studios. Scone's been the Hammond voice with the likes of Lou Donaldson, while Carman has more of a blues background, all complemented by Jimmy James' clean as a cold shot guitar.

The result is raw, straight ahead, drenched in a Blue Note/ Prestigey vibe but lit up with grooves ransacked from the usual suspects: Grant Green, The Meters, the MGs, James Brown. But it's all very much their sound. With the freshness that comes but once when artists first meet and write together, *In Green We Dream* is indeed a jazz-soul-funk dream come true. James is effects free, all feel and rhythm, and is superb on the groove of 'Parlor Strut'.

But then we're all aboard for a sweet waltzer, 'Sugar Maple'. 'The Ripper' is just that with James again the space cowboy. A slave to vinyl, *In Green We Dream* is annoyingly short at 34 minutes given to 11 cuts; but less leaves you wanting more. Now, where are those Oxfords...? **Andy Robson**

Ivo Perelman Quartet
Water Music

Rogueart ROG-0135 (CD, DL) ★★★

Ivo Perelman (ts), Matthew Shipp (p), Mark Helias (b) and Tom Rainey (d) Rec. 2022

Saxophonist Ivo Perelman has one of the largest and most varied discographies in contemporary improvised music; but along with his duo releases, the quartet is a recurrent vehicle for him. The presence of pianist Matthew Shipp reinforces the sense of continuum but with drummer Tom Rainey and bassist Mark Helias he has bandmembers who have a long history of responsive accompaniment that also sees them 'lead from the back' when necessary.

If this makes a supergroup of sorts, then Perelman himself makes significant changes in his approach, above all with the use of a new mouthpiece that has had a notable effect on his tone. It's not that tenderness did not previously exist in Pereleman's work, but it is more pronounced in places, as the vaporous quality of the phrases takes him from Ike Quebec to Paul Desmond.

Yet for all that lightness and delicacy there is no loss of what could be called beauty by belligerence, a personal take on Monk's provocative 'ugly beauty.' Perelman and Shipp have made a virtue of being able to tangle and twist rhythms over the years, superimposing the most off of offbeats on a mechanical pulse and it is a patented technique they still deploy to good effect.

Elsewhere the severity and sensuality combine in the most engaging of ways when the band works through passages of dense abstraction and then slides organically into an oddly constructed yet nonetheless exultant dance rhythm, as in the final third of 'Flow', the disc's highlight.

Perelman, who has issued some 125 albums to date, is on his way to becoming one of the most recorded figures in jazz history but of greater significance is the fact that he has wrought a personal vocabulary and kept his creative standards unerringly high. **Kevin Le Gendre**

PNY Quintet
Over The Wall

Rogueart ROG-0134 (CD, DL) ★★★

Steve Swell (tb), Rob Brown (as), Michel Edelin (f), Peter Giron (b) and John Betsch (d). Rec. 2022

French label Rogueart has long been an important home for American and European improvisers who occasionally join forces to make a

fine transatlantic avant-garde.

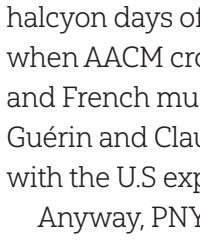
That is the case with PNY quintet (presumably an acronym for Paris New York), which comprises one Frenchman, flautist Michel Edelin and four Americans, trombonist Steve Swell, alto saxophonist Rob Brown, bassist Peter Giron and drummer John Betsch, the last two having spent many years living in '*la ville lumiere*.' One could place the music in a long lineage reaching back to the halcyon days of the early 1970s when AACM crossed the water and French musicians like Beb Guérin and Claude Decloo played with the U.S expats.

Anyway, PNY is piano-less, like many of the above bands, and its dry, flinty heavy sound makes a sizeable impact when the whole ensemble is in action, though it also holds the interest when it breaks down into smaller units, where the vivid timbral contrasts between the brass and woodwinds are ear-catching. PNY plots an entirely personal course through myriad traditions to make the past an unbroken link to the present, as exemplified by the wonderful 'New Orleans', which squeezes the city's trademark second line groove into a kind of one and a half skank, where the beat is broken into a humourous hide 'n' seek. Steeped in history, yet anything but anachronistic, PNY is a noteworthy advert for the multi-nationality group that creates a compelling language *sans paroles*. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Nigel Price Organ Trio
LIVE '23

Nervy Nigel Records NERVYCD005 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Nigel Price (el g), Ross Stanley, Peter Johnstone (org) and Joel Barford (d).
Rec. 30 November 2023, 16 November 2022



The definition of jazz, as a specific musical form, was contested almost from its inception, but when the non-specialist audience think of jazz they usually imagine an iteration that evolved in the 1950s under a very specific set of circumstances - extended nightclub residencies that allowed bands to develop a collective sensibility as they improvised over the hip standards of the day. That scene has now largely vanished, but we're fortunate that there remain players like Nigel Price who are still flying the flag for the bop verities and have the energy and enthusiasm (and the following) to create the epic 43 date tour from which these live recordings are derived. It's a rarity nowadays to hear a band so thoroughly played in, exploring the corners of the standard repertoire with a panache and brio that comes from the total commitment required to sustain such a high level of execution over so many nights.

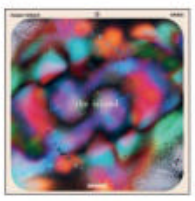
In some hands the organ trio format can veer towards the bombastically two-dimensional, but this album is an object lesson in exploring the depth of its possibilities.

Those who are familiar with Mr Price's robust online personality and thorough mastery of the post-Benson guitar shred may be surprised by the restraint and delicacy he brings to the airily grooving 'Morning Star' and the masterly 'Spring Can Really Hang You Up The Most', throughout adding a subtle harmonic depth to the speed and accuracy of his flow, while 'Ain't Necessarily So' is authentically, greasily low-down without descending into cliché. Special mention should go to Joel Barford for his endlessly inventive trades, and the way he incorporates his extensively contemporary technique so sympathetically into the format, and both organists excel in textural support, solo virtuosity, and the all-important low end groove. But it's the band that is the real star: this is jazz as a collective endeavour, as it was in the classic era. There's a lot of music here and all of it is good - best relax, pour a glass of something, and let it all wash over you. **Eddie Myer**

Kasper Rietkerk
The Island

ZenneZ ZR2024017 (CD, DL) ★★★

Kasper Rietkerk (as), Benji Brown (p), Jonah Evans (d), Toby Yapp (b), Alex Lockheart (g), Max McLeish (tb) plus guests Immy Churchill (v), Emma Rawicz (ts), Anatole Muster (acc), Ezo Sarici, Emily Harrison (vn), Charlie Howells (vla) and Cubby Howard (clo).
Rec. date not stated



The Island is the debut by the young Dutch saxophonist-composer Kasper Rietkerk, who a few years ago moved to London to attend the Royal Academy jazz course. During this period he formed his contemporary London-based sextet KRSIX who appear alongside a handful of notable guests on this new recording.

On opener 'Baiji' the band borrows from the vocabulary of indie rock with its chiming guitar, horn riffs and fierce backbeat yet with hints of New Orleans funk in a middle section. But a mellower, pastoral mood also pervades thereafter starting with 'Roll it in Glitter' with the leader's alto sax's warmly expressive vocal-like tone and a string quartet and wordless vocal discreetly rather than dramatically colouring the scenery.

A rising star guest soloist, the Swiss, London-based accordionist Anatole Muster also adds a fresh timbre. As does another guest contributor: the UK sax starlet Emma Rawicz, to whose orchestra the leader contributes, leads the pack on 'Ship of Fools' her darkly languid Donny McCaslin-ish ballad tenor articulately bursting into life until an impressively sonorous guitar solo by Alex Lockheart grabs the attention.

All of this marks a promising debut album full of Rietkerk's bittersweet and well-crafted compositions. **Selwyn Harris**

Nigel Price

Tomeka Reid
3+3 And Then

Cuneiform RUNE525 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Tomeka Reid (clo), Mary Halvorson (el g), Jason Roebke (b) and Tomas Fujiwara (d).
Rec. 20-21 August 2023

Aside from her work with Nicole Mitchell and Art Ensemble Of Chicago, Tomeka Reid has staked a claim as a key figure among the relatively small number of cellist-composer-bandleaders in improvised music. She is an excellent soloist, as commanding with pizzicato as she is arco, but she also has a gift for writing melodies that can be as charmingly nostalgic as they are seductively unsettling.

Reid's thematic material is abundantly rich and her longstanding quartet is an exemplary vehicle for bringing it to life, partly because of the astute choice of instrumentation, in which Reid's cello, Jason Roebke's double bass and Mary Halvorson's guitar form a kind of alternative string section, such are their cohesion, smart dovetailing and tight counterpoint. Yet the individual sounds are strong within the ensemble voice. Perhaps most cleverly Halvorson's pinging electronic distortions imply that a virtual harp has joined the fold to emphasize the odd orchestral flavour of the music, which, due to the advanced sensitivity of the string players often suggests that the polyrhythmically agile Tomas Fujiwara is in the foreground rather than background.

The balance between improvisation and composition makes the work especially interesting and Reid has found a way of extending some of the left handed hard blues vocabulary of Abdul Wadud and Julius Hemphill and the classical-jazz subversions of Deirdre Murray and Fred Hopkins. Reid asserts herself as an artist with sufficient ideas and ability to be a notable contemporary addition to such illustrious historic precedents. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Julius Rodriguez
Evergreen

Verve 653767 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Julius Rodriguez (p, ky, syn, d, b, g, cl, prog), Luke Titas, Brian Richburg (d), Nicole McCabe (as), Nate Mercereau (syn, g), Philip Norris (el b, b, d), Jermaine Paul (b), Emilio Modeste (s), Alonzo Demetrius, Keyon Harrold (t), Declan Miers (b), Chris Lewis (ts), Jay Adlher and Georgia Anne Muldrow (v). Rec. date not stated

Drummer, pianist, multi-instrumentalist, composer, producer and (since he's still only 25) *wunderkind* Julius Rodriguez has spent several years as a sideman for some of America's brightest: Kurt Elling, Keyon Harrold and Wynton Marsalis among them. As a long-time member of Isaiah Barr's Onyx Collective he's collaborated with A$AP Rocky and members of the Wu Tang Clan, and has cited influences – Duke Ellington, John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk – passed down by his jazz-loving dad.

Let Sound Tell All, Rodriguez's 2021 debut on Verve, had many critics in raptures for its push-the-boat out mix of effects, electronics, swinging acoustic stylings and choice of collaborators including the gifted Samara Joy. *Evergreen* eschews genre, opting to present different worlds within each track; opener 'Mission Statement' is a Hancock-esque excursion on keys that follows a melodic line to a cliff edge; a cover of 'Many Times' by leftfield R&B act Dijon has washes of strings moving into bouts of muscular pianism before concertina-ing into glitchy beats, chattering cymbals and electronic bleeps then out into propulsive piano, all of it bold, prodigious, F-you audacious. Keyon Harrold features, golden trumpet in hand, on 'Love Everlasting'; Georgia Anne Muldrow unleashes impassioned vocals over chanted exhortations and classical, then experimental, piano on 'Champion's Call', a closer strafed with pathos.

Not so much a masterwork as a master at play, *Evergreen* will likely stand the test of time. **Jane Cornwell**

Adam Rudolph & Tyshawn Sorey
Archaisms I & II

Meta Yeros 7/Defkaz (2 LP, DL) ★★★★

Adam Rudolph (perc, elec) Tyshawn Sorey (d, p) Sae Hashimoto, Russell Greenberg, Levy Lorenzo (perc). Rec. 2021, 2023

The meeting of two rhythm masters of different generations produces expectedly interesting results. Active since the 1970s percussionist Adam Rudolph made vital contributions to the music of Yusef Lateef and Don Cherry among others, whereas drummer Tyshawn Sorey has distinguished himself through work with Vijay Iyer and Steve Lehman since the late 2000s.

Both Rudolph and Sorey are composer-bandleaders in their own right and a real sense of authority and maturity marks their collaboration. Certainly, on both albums of the two-volume set there are moments of precisely measured restraint and focus where the duo allows a single sound, be it the hissing of a shaker, popping of a temple block or chattering of a snare drum, to vividly take the spotlight rather than be a passing shadow.

Tyshawn Sorey

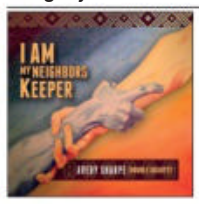
But that invariably triggers a polyrhythmic build-up that is often resonantly African in character, especially when Rudolph patters a thumb piano against Sorey's pneumatic roll of toms, whose felt-like baritone contrasts beautifully with the former's metallic soprano. The expansion of the duo to a quintet on *Archaisms 11* is an exciting development insofar as the presence of three other percussionists fleshes out the vocabulary, though Sorey's enticingly staggered piano and Rudolph's crystalline electronics bring a high degree of finesse to the constantly shifting canvas.

There are faint echoes of Max Roach's pioneering *M'Boom*, and the important idea of making drum-based music an orchestral phenomenon is implemented with all the requisite ability and bravado. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Avery Sharpe Double Quartet
I Am My Neighbor's Keeper

JKNM Records (CD, DL) ★★★

Avery Sharpe (b), Zaccai Curtis, Mat DeChamplain (p), Yoron Israel, Anton Kot (d), Tony Vacca (balafon, African perc), Sarah Briggs, Kaila Graef (vn), Gregory Diehl (vla), Dave Haughey and Wanda Rivera (v). Rec. 2023



In common with many listeners, I discovered Avery Sharpe's work during his two-decades-plus as bassist with McCoy Tyner, hearing him gel perfectly with the piano maestro on both sides of the Atlantic. But his career has moved on significantly since then, and this new album finds him combining his acoustic quartet with Curtis, Israel and Vacca with a string quartet.

The project is to remind us of our responsibilities to one another, to reject the selfish values of 'IGM' or 'I Got Mine', in favour of a more caring attitude. The opening 'My Friend Don't Be Afraid to Ask For Help' uses the strings as a framework for the jazz group, with fine solos particularly from Curtis and Vacca. But as the album goes on, 'Unspoken Words' includes a jazz cello solo, setting the stage for some fine pizzicato from Sharpe.

The other strings add texture to a sparkling performance. Rivera's deep-toned voice offers 'A Little Prayer for Mom' again with a bowed string solo as a counterpart, while DeChamplain and Kot take over the piano and drum stools for a forcefully played jazz quartet version of 'Parental Love' with some fine solo playing from Sharpe. All in all, an absorbing album, with a strong social message. **Alyn Shipton**

Tom Skinner
Voices Of Bishara Live at mu

International Anthem IARC0076 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Tom Skinner (d), Kareem Dayes (clo), Chelsea Carmichael (ts, f), Tom Herbert (b) and Robert Stillman (ts). Rec. 18-19 January 2023

Tom Skinner has established a considerable reputation as the go-to guy for projects that skirt the experimental fringes of jazz and not-jazz, especially if they involve punchy high-energy grooves - see his involvement with Melt Yourself Down, his co-leadership of Sons Of Kemet, his very own Hello Skinny, and his currently elevated profile as drummer for Radiohead spin-off Smile.

This project takes a different direction: it's a recorded-live extension of Skinner's debut under his own name. That album enlisted Shabaka Hutchings and Nubya Garcia to explore the legacy of multi-genre cellist Abdul Wadid, who may be best known to readers of this publication for his collaborations with Arthur Blythe.

This version has a different band and some additional material by Wadud. It's much more textural and free-flowing than the rest of Skinners' back catalogue, though there are clear echoes of Sons Of Kemet in the skirling sax duel over rolling toms that concludes 'Happiness'.

This iteration is also looser and freer than the studio version, possibly due to the presence of Robert Stillman - his hoarse-toned teasing at gnomic motivic structures provides a nice contrast to Chelsea Carmichael's clear-toned, melodic and more overtly jazz-inflected contributions - she sounds great on 'Camille'. Tom Herbert's deep earthy arco is similarly complimentary to Kareem Dayes' versatile, attractively rough-edged cello.

Compositions are by Wadud, Tony Williams, and Skinner himself, and even in its more upbeat moments the mood is portentous and introspective - this is music that invites you to take it seriously. The commitment of the players is clear to hear and the contour of the gig moves affectingly from the more diffuse opening pieces (by Skinner) to the more cohesive closers (by Wadud), though some listeners might prefer the more concise and focussed studio versions.

Eddie Myer

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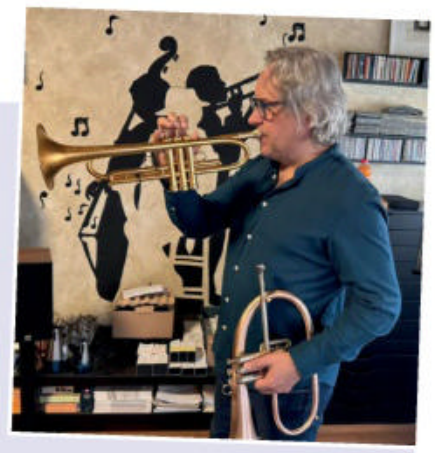
Alex Sipiagin
Horizons

Blue Room Music BRM1014 (CD, DL)

★★★★

Alex Sipiagin (t), Chris Potter (ts, ss), John Escreet (p), Matt Brewer (b) and Eric Harland (d). Rec. June 2023



The tight themes, rich sonics and compact improvisations of trumpeter Alex Sipiagin's second release for the New Jersey-based Blue Room record label reflect continuity and mutual respect. Saxophonist Chris Potter played on the trumpeter's debut release, *Images*, which was released in 1998, and has gone on to appear on nearly a dozen more. And though this is only the fourth album with this particular rhythm section – the first, *Balance 38-58*, was released on Criss Cross in 2015 – the band members have been rubbing shoulders on the New York jazz scene for more than a decade.

Sipiagin's music gives contemporary modern jazz a left-field twist, which is signalled on 'While You Weren't Looking', the album's opening track. Here, fast boppish lines come with acerbic keyboard stabs and a richly harmonised bridge is declamatory. The track is one of two pieces written by Pat Metheny especially for the recording – he wanted "to give the musicians something to think about... something crazy, fast, complicated", according to the sleeve. Metheny's second tune, 'When is Now', a beautifully harmonised ballad, comes later in the set.

The body of the album is made up of Sipiagin originals, three of which were inspired by the trumpeter's recent move to Italy. 'Clean Cut' bustles over edge-of-seat beats, 'Jumping Ahead' finds pianist John Escreet raising steam with two-handed clusters of sound and 'Lost' rumbles along while shifting meter and mood.

Three tracks, 'Horizons 1,2 &3' were through-improvised on the date and confirm the musicians' close bond, technical prowess and control of sound. Potter and Sipiagin blend beautifully, bassist Matt Brewer and drummer Eric Harland deliver dynamics, thrust and ebb-and-flow beats and Escreet combines the delicate textures of acoustic piano with eerie electronics and overdubbed synth.

The album ends with trumpet and sax duetting over the summery groove of 'AVIA-tion'. Though even here, there are enough skin-tight tricky bits to keep the listener engaged. **Mike Hobart**

SOL SOL
Almost All Things Considered

Sail Cabin Records SCRCD003 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Elin Forkelid (ts, as), David Stackenäs (g), Mauritz Agnas (db) and Anna Lund (d). Rec. 24-25 August 2023

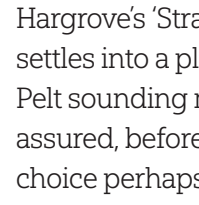
The six tracks of this third album from Swedish quartet SOL SOL were alternately composed by saxophonist Elin Forkelid and guitarist David Stackenäs. Each is well respected as both composer and free improviser and the tension between those elements as well as their separate stylistic approaches generates a nicely disruptive edge to the band's sound. The guitarist's 'If Not, Marbles' proceeds nonchalantly from a lyrical waltz opening to an off-kilter blues that doesn't quite resolve while guitar and sax wrangle over the possibilities. The title track – another Stackenäs number, overlays a remorselessly hefty rock groove with some free playing reminiscent of Get The Blessing. His third number closes the album with a bang: 'Hello Again, Paul' is almost a five-time grunge reworking of 'Louie Louie' that clearly has to be their live show encore number.

Forkelid's first contribution 'Elena' opens the album briskly with anthemic sax and guitar preceding a sequence of free interludes characterized by hoarsely impassioned sax and synth-FX guitar. 'The First Days of Spring' is more closely written, with a jaunty upbeat feel, a nimble bass solo and assertive drumming – though it oddly fades out just as Forkelid's sax takes off for a solo. And there's a straightforward clarity to 'Can I Have The Bill, Please?' that nods to Bill Frisell or Andy Sheppard with its combination of melodic economy and an unhurriedly spacious arrangement. The number allows drummer Anna Lund and bass player Mauritz Agnas room to gently coax the tune along. All in all – and (almost) all things considered - the album offers an enjoyably varied summation of four stylish players relishing creative difference through collectivity. **Tony Benjamin**

Something Else!
Soul Jazz

Smoke Sessions Records SSR-2403 (CD, DL) ★★★

Vincent Herring (as), Jeremy Pelt (t), Wayne Escoffery (ts), David Kikoski (p), Paul Bollenback (g), Essiet Essiet (b) and Otis Brown III (d). Rec. date not stated



Predicated as a new 'dream' band and fronted by Herring, this group of top players is setting out to attract newer listeners to the 'groove-centric' music of such late masters as Horace Silver, Eddie Harris and Donald Byrd, etc. Herring states that as all concerned grew up in an era when soul and R&B were the common currency, they are steeped in its protocols and know what to do. So far, so good.

It's Silver's 'Filthy McNasty' first, taken at speed, the groove more agitated than relaxed, Herring astringent, Pelt straining, the drums clumpy. 'Too Blue' is reflective, Kikoski's piano just right, Bollenback superb, his playing understated, the theme cast in call and response style, Escoffrey uncluttered, the whole effect promising. Harris's 'Mean Greens' has Herring in soulful mood, the riff theme quite jerky but it moves well. As does 'The Chicken', a Pee Wee Ellis number, funky over boogaloo drums.

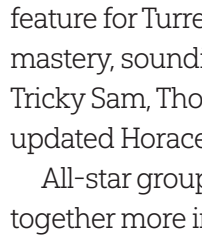
'Cool Driftin' is better, Herring impassioned, Pelt poised and playful, bass and drums finding their way well. Byrd's 'Slow Drag' is the album highlight, laid back, its stop-start structure impressive, the voicing distinctive. Roy Hargrove's 'Strasbourg/St Denis' settles into a pleasing groove, Pelt sounding more and more assured, before 'Naima', an unusual choice perhaps, allows Bollenback to build a strong solo, with Pelt muted, any latent funkiness set aside.

The format and style of this band's chosen genre is repetitive, of course, and these advanced players may need some more challenging material on which to strut their stuff in future. There's a fourth star lurking in there somewhere but it's as yet unrealised. More time together should do it. **Peter Vacher**

Steve Turre
Sanyas

Smoke Sessions Records SSR-2404 (CD, DL) ★★★

Steve Turre (tb, shells), Nicholas Payton (t), Ron Blake (ts), Isaiah J Thompson (p), Buster Williams (b) and Lenny White (d). Rec. date not stated



Recorded live as part of the Smoke Jazz Club's 25th Anniversary Season, Turre's band open his title piece with some semi-free collective chuntering, the effect much like an orchestral tune-up. This is followed by a lengthy bass interlude before an ensemble passage of startling ordinariness, the compositional quality akin to a first-year practice piece.

Turre solos over a repetitive piano and drums figure, Blake plays at length, gradually coarsening his attack, Turre adds his shells, the sound quite louche. The audience liked it; it seemed tedious to me. 'All The Things You Are' is taken staccato, White hindering rather than helping, Turre's solo, jagged and abrupt, with no reference to the theme, Payton disinterested while Thompson searches for a connection, the band looking for lift-off.

Turre's 'Wishful Thinking', features its composer handling the theme, Payton partnering him as Thompson shows his blues side. Lee Morgan's 'Mr Kenyatta' is more relaxed, Williams' perfect bass line coming through as it does on the version of 'These Foolish Things which follows, this principally a feature for Turre's plunger-muted mastery, sounding like a latter-day Tricky Sam, Thompson soloing in updated Horace Silver fashion.

All-star groups are often brought together more in hope than expectation, and this one needed greater animation and a more challenging repertoire to suggest recommendation. **Peter Vacher**

Kathrine Windfeld

Alexis Valet
Following the Sun

Jazz & People JPCD 824002

(CD, DL) ★★★

Alexis Valet (vb), Dayna Stephens (ts), Aaron Parks (p), Joe Martin (b) and Kush Abadey (d). Rec. December 2022

The young Bordeaux-raised vibraphonist Alexis Valet was good enough soon after his student years to recruit European jazz stars like guitarist Romain Pilon, flautist Magic Malik and keyboardist Bojan Z to play on his early albums.

Those waves had barely settled by the time he took a leap further with *Following the Sun*, recorded with a fine New York line-up including sophisticated pianist Aaron Parks and Cool-to-Coltrane saxophonist Dayna Stephens - the encounter being triggered by the Frenchman's snap decision in 2022 to hop on a plane to the States without funding or a plan, and try playing with whoever he met.

Classic American hard bop clearly influences Valet, but mainly in the distinctive ways he uses his bop-harmony awareness to avoid the method's cliches. The opening 'Ups and Downs' develops a coolly purring theme over a quiet bass hook and gentle piano chording, but the song's expected resolutions are deflected by clusters of notes that startlingly delay its close - an approach for which Stephens and Parks, with their affinity for long, undulating improv lines, could hardly be better suited.

The yearning tenor theme of 'Dreams of Integrity' brings a vibes solo addressing rhythm as much as harmony, and the fast swing pulse that follows the title track's dreamy intro highlights how shapely Valet's improvisations are even on the fastest swing. 'Cypher' and 'Lekeitio' - the first a smoky sax melody over a bass vamp, the second a ballad theme on a ticking Latin groove - bring graceful, floating solos from Stephens and Parks, while Valet saves one of his most exhilaratingly surefooted sprints for the finale, on the spikily boppish 'Myrtle'. This is elegant, occasionally languorous music, but Valet's significant arrival on jazz's world stage is unmistakeable. **John Fordham**

Kathrine Windfeld Sextet
Aldebaran

Stunt STU23122 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Kathrine Windfeld (p), Tomasz Dabrowski (tp), Hannes Bennich (as, ts) Marek Konarski (ts) Johannes Vaht (b) and Henrik Holst Hansen (d). Rec. September 2023

With some comparing her work to that of Maria Schneider, the Danish pianist-composer Kathrine Windfeld comes with a justified reputation in Scandinavia as an accomplished contemporary jazz orchestral leader-composer. She's made a few recordings with her contemporary jazz big band, of which *Orca* stands out, as well as collaborations with the cream of Scandinavian's most esteemed jazz orchestras.

But behind the scenes, Windfeld has been nurturing her work with small groups, one of them being her international sextet, with *Aldebaran* being its debut recording. The richly-coloured instrumental arrangements are not only elegantly and urbanely constructed, but have a determinedly strong melodic thrust.

Perhaps inevitably, the instrumental palette here sounds broader than the small line-up might suggest. Piano vamps are the foundation for some on-target solos on the outstanding opener 'First Speech' with sumptuous horns and swirling dynamics adding to the music's intrigue. The ballad 'Burnout' hints at *Miles Ahead*-period Gil and Miles, while 'Letter to Lviv' has translucent horns weaved together in an Igor Stravinsky-ish neo-classical style.

While not being a particularly fashionable attribute, *Aldebaran* is a real grower that reveals more and more of its understated sophistication and emotional depth with every play. **Selwyn Harris**

Shortcuts: CD New Releases

Paul Bryan
Western Electric

Self-release ★★★

If slacker jazz is a thing, then in-demand session bassist/synth player Bryan has nailed it here with this downbeat but detailed electro-trio album. Also featuring drummer Jay Bellerose (Diana Krall) and saxophonist Josh Johnson (Makaya McCraven), this freewheeling set is perhaps best summarised as Boards of Canada meets Sonny Rollins. **(MF)**

Nicola Caminiti
Vivid Tales of a Blurry Self-Portrait

Self-release/Bandcamp ★★★★

A very promising debut from this talented young Italian alto and soprano saxophonist and his bass-drums-piano rhythm section. The 11 tunes, which seem to focus on the composer's experiences as an immigrant in New York, are all Caminiti's own, and demonstrate a remarkable degree of sophistication and maturity. One to watch. **(KW)**

Max Clouth
Entelecheia

Bellaphon ★★

German guitarist Clouth is a dab hand at ethnic texture – here he incorporates Indian, Persion and west African music into a contemporary jazz framework; but frustratingly, he's let down by a rather lightweight, synth-dominated backing. **(KW)**

Thierry Eliez
Emerson Enigma

DOOD ★★★

This wildly ambitious work from piano virtuoso Eliez draws inspiration from Keith Emerson (of ELP), as well as Janacek, Prokofiev, Ginastera, Mussorgsky, Bernstein, Bartok, and J.S Bach. It's an oddly compelling blend of sonorous strings, piano improv and Eliez's passable rock-edged vocals. **(MF)**

Julieta Eugenio
Stay

Self-release ★★★★

That great keyboardist, Leo Genovese, guests on fellow Argentinian Eugenio's latest outing. The saxophonist, known for her often haunting, melancholic tone and assertive blowing, has really developed her playing and writing since her 2022 debut album *Jump*. A thoughtful, engaging collection. **(KW)**

Peter van Huffel's Callisto
Meandering Demons

Clean Feed ★★★

Saxophonist van Huffel and his group really know how to incorporate acoustic jazz instruments (sax, piano, trumpet, drums) with electronics. As a result *Demons* avoids the usual 'jazztronica' cliches and manages to be both powerful and texturally compelling. **(KW)**

Alex LoRe & Weirdear
Evening Will Find Itself

Whirlwind Recordings ★★★

NYC-based alto saxophonist LoRe exhibits poise and maturity on this set that brings to mind the airily beautiful playing and music of soft-toned tenorist Mark Turner. There's winning restraint from pianist Glenn Zaleski and the rhythm section who tackle LoRe's unfurling angular originals with an attractive lightness of touch. **(MF)**

Christian Marien Quartett
How Long Is Now

MarMade Records ★★★

Marten's first album as leader finds the Berlin-based drummer and composer and his group (tenor, clarinet, guitar and bass) mining the spirit of Ornette on a free-spirited collection of tunes. **(KW)**

Amina Mezaache & Maracuja
Vortex

Veston Léger/InOuïe ★★★

Flautist Mezaache fronts her charmingly unconventional quartet on their third release that salutes the offbeat brilliance of Hermeto Pascoal and Egberto Gismonti. Comprised of flute, nylon-string guitar, percussion and notably the flexible sousaphone playing of Fabien Debellefontaine, *Vortex* is packed with tightly-arranged samba grooves and vertiginous solos from the leader. **(MF)**

Reginald Policard
Boarding Pass

Encuentro Music ★★★

Haitian pianist Reginald Policard brings together some A-list talents such as bassist Richard Bona, singer Angélique Kidjo and percussion powerhouse Sammy Figueroa on this shimmeringly ambitious Afro-Cuban set. The music is impeccably smooth but would have benefitted from some raw edges too. **(MF)**

Travis Reuter
Quintet Music

Self-release ★★

This intense, dense, labyrinthine post-fusion guitar-led album – fronted by rising guitar name Reuter (in full-on post-Holdsworth mode) – features a dream team of Mark Shim (tenor sax), Tyshawn Sorey (drums) Peter Schlamb (vibes) and Harish Raghavan (bass). Yet while the technique is off the charts, the impenetrable, note-heavy solos and "melodies" quickly become exhausting. **(MF)**

Chris Rottmayer
Being

Shifting Paradigm ★★★

Rottmayer, a pianist, composer and educator from Wisconsin, wrote this, his fourth album, as part of a study of his hero, fellow pianist Mulgrew Miller and his recordings with the Woody Shaw Quartet. As much a lesson as a tribute. **(KW)**

Albums: Reissues/Archive

★★★★★ Landmark Recording ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Disappointing

John Abercrombie/ Dave Holland/ Jack DeJohnette

Gateway

ECM Luminessence 1061 (LP, DL)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

John Abercrombie (g), Dave Holland (b) and Jack DeJohnette (d). Rec. March 1975

Abercrombie had debuted as a leader in his own right on the ECM label in 1974 with a trio comprising DeJohnette and Jan Hammer on keyboards (who a matter of months before had been a member of the Mahavishnu Orchestra); that LP, *Timeless,* was an album of its time, of fire and passion, but elegance too, replete with exciting and wholesome jazz improvisation while revealing a more lyrical side of Hammer not heard in Mahavishnu which has stood the test of time.

Gateway, by contrast, is a more laid-back affair, with four of the six tracks composed by Holland. These tend to be functional, to set tempi and keys, and in the main adhere to the 'time no changes' principle (keeping the time, ignoring chord changes), with no preset harmonies. However, the guitarist's playing, while never lacking for spontaneity, is the product of an acute musical mind and while, to all intents and purposes, this music is open; Abercrombie somehow follows a preordained compositional trajectory. It is this structural strength in his improvisations that gives this music its strength and universality, reaching beyond the jazz audiences into musically curious rock fans.

Although Abercrombie uses 1970s electronic effects (there's a fuzzbox on two tracks, a reminder of the broader musical context from which these collaborations emerged), the album eludes sounding 'dated' and has been returned to again and again over the years by succeeding generations as they become aware of this music, sufficiently often to secure *Gateway*'s reputation as one of the great classic jazz trio albums. **Stuart Nicholson**

Ornette Coleman

Friends And Neighbors: Live At Prince Street

Flying Dutchman/BGP HIQ LP116 (LP, DL)

★★★★

Ornette Coleman (as, t, vn), Dewey Redman (ts), Charlie Haden (b) and Ed Blackwell (d). Rec. 14 February 1970

Although the sleeve credit '...and the voices of friends and neighbors' suggests a footnote, if not an afterword to the main story of this historic album it is anything but. The beautifully rousing chants, complete with high pitches – which suggest the presence of children – of the aforesaid choir may include significant members of the late 1960s New York jazz 'loft' community that assembled around places such as Ornette Coleman's 131 Prince street residence.

We see those community members in the beautifully informal photos on the album sleeve: Pharoah Sanders, Leon Thomas, Don Cherry and Gil Evans all look typically charismatic, yet relaxed. The sense of a family gathering that nonetheless has focus is borne out by the beautiful music made by Coleman's quartet that features some of his most able co-creators – bassist Charlie Haden, drummer Ed Blackwell and tenor saxophonist Dewey Redman.

Ornette Coleman

Together they craft a cunningly loose, ambling 'country funk' groove that is enhanced by deeply expressive solos and pithy unison lines. Coleman himself sounds wonderfully relaxed.

The title track, with its explosive burst of back o' woods fiddle playing screeching into life, is a gem, but so are the gospelised 'Let's Play', the wonderfully stop-start 'Long Time No See' and the joyously humourous 'Forgotten Song.' It captures the innocence as well as the urbane cool of the two kids on the front cover. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Louis Armstrong All Stars

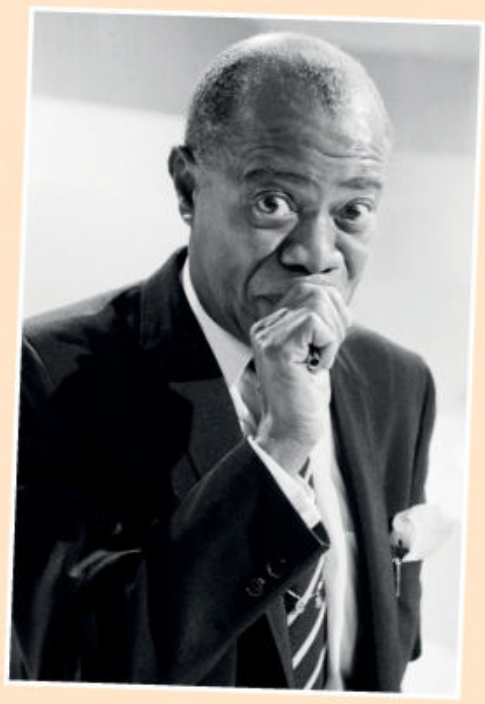
Louis In London

Verve 6554369 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Louis Armstrong (t, v), Tyree Glenn (tb), Joe Muranyi (cl), Marty Napoleon (p), Buddy Catlett (b) and Danny Barcelona (d). Rec. 2 July 1968

Every All Stars concert for many years began with 'Sleepy Time Down South' and this one is no exception (the version here coming from the first set at the BBC Television Theatre). Then came 'Indiana' – so predictable that when Barney Bigard rejoined the band after a five-year period away, he wrote 'it was still 'Indiana'! But this final line-up of the All Stars plays it with conviction and freshness.

When Louis came back on stage for the second BBC set in July 1968, after another opening "Sleepy Time' he dropped 'Indiana' as his second number and produced a fine version of WC Handy's 'Ole Miss', going back to his earliest days, and it's released for the first time on this album (out on 12 July). 'Kiss To Build a Dream On' is an Armstrong standard, seldom bettered than on the 1954 Cornell concert released on *Rarities* from February 1954, with the same pianist as here, Marty Napoleon, but with the massively more experienced rhythm section of Milt Hinton and Cozy Cole.



Yet somehow, this BBC version conveys much of the same passion as Louis' earlier recording from 14 years before, though his trumpet playing is less extrovert. The BBC concert has plenty of his more recent hits, to the extent that even the piano intro to 'Helly Dolly' gets a round of applause. This version of it, with two false endings, is different from the 1971 Brunswick LP release of some of this material – and Louis achieves the magical trick of getting the audience to clap on the off-beat. 'Blueberry Hill' has some fine low register playing from Muranyi, and he and Glenn create a perfect backing for the vocal. With fine versions of 'Bare Necessities', 'Mack The Knife' and Armstrong's recent hit 'Wonderful World', this is not only one of the final recordings by the All Stars, but one of their best. **Alyn Shipton**

Elton Dean's Unlimited Saxophone Company

Elton Dean's Unlimited Saxophone Company

Ogun OGCD 002 (CD, DL) ★★★

Elton Dean (as, saxello), Trevor Watts (as), Paul Dunmall (ts, bs), Simon Picard (ts), Paul Rogers (b) and Tony Levin (d). Rec. 7 May 1989

As far as the surviving band members can recall, Dean's Unlimited Saxophone Company performed live just three times: the group's first appearance before the public was this 7 May 1989 date at the Covent Garden Jazz Saxophone Festival; its last, at the Europa Jazz Festival in Le Mans in May 1991, is available as a download when you buy this album.

Opening with 'Unda,' with Dean's saxello stating the theme against simply voiced ensembles, the die is cast for a straight ahead session that is engaging for its unpretentiousness and compelling for its energy. 'Seven for Lee' was something of a signature tune for Dean, while 'Small Strides' is a play on the name of 'Giant Steps,' minus the harmonic complexity. Dean, Trevor Watts and Paul Dunmall all put their shoulder to the wheel to make this session work. In all, six numbers are negotiated with cheerful yet determined abandon that make this a fascinating microcosm of British jazz that briefly flowered, orchid-like for a day (or so) before vanishing.

Originally issued by Hazel Miller for Ogun, this reissue includes fresh essays by Giles Quinnell and Philippe Renauld while the tapes were remastered for this release by Caspar Sutton-Jones of Gearbox Records. **Stuart Nicholson**

Hampton Hawes

For Real!

Contemporary/Craft Recordings
CR00709 (LP, DL) ★★★★

Harold Land (ts), Hampton Hawes (p), Scott LaFaro (b), Frank Butler (d)
Rec. March 1958

Creating headlines like 'Junkie Jazzman Pardoned by President', Hampton Hawes' career was never short of controversy. Indeed, the pianist's hyper-candid mid-1970s autobiography *Raise Up Off Me* rivals that of his colleague Art Pepper for tales of the darker side of Los Angeles' sunny-seeming jazz scene.

The real story, of course, lay in his considerable musical gift, which, by the time this 1958 session was laid down on disc, had reached something close to a state of piano perfection. Combining a steam-hammer percussiveness in his right hand with accompanying harmonies that spoke as much of the blues as they did of bop, Hawes' style was one of the defining sounds of 1950s jazz (in the sleeve note here, André Previn rightly pulls up those thinking this sort of thing was all Horace Silver's doing), its genesis thankfully captured on a series of now iconic albums on the Contemporary label.

Most of these had the pianist front and centre *sans* horns, but *For Real!* yokes him with stylistic stablemate tenorist Harold Land, a player whose grainy, warm tone and chewy articulation mix particularly well on a programme divided between tricky bop heads and a couple of songful standards.

Make no mistake though; this isn't a tenor and rhythm section record *manqué*. Hawes' hands here guide every move, whether it be the surprising choice of a groovy 'Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams' or his own creations like the catchy 'Hip'.

The action, however, isn't all out front. The pre-Bill Evans trio LaFaro is simply astonishing, whether soloing or locking in with Butler's combustible beat (hear the tempo-de-insane 'I Love You'). In fact, his smack-on ensemble playing might be a revelation for any naysayers who still think of him as merely the instigator of the high-wire bass improvisation. The drummer too, fully justifies his legend as a sort of West Coast Philly Joe Jones.

Once again Craft have created a faithful LP facsimile, full of period detail right down to the memorial addendum to LaFaro, who died just prior to the original album's release. Tactfully, no mention was made in the jacket notes of Hawes' incarceration for narcotics offences at the time of issue. His subsequent release in 1963 heralded Act Two of his career. Some of the best scenes of the first act though, are right here. **Simon Spillett**

Duke's secret after-hours bonus

Duke Ellington

Copenhagen 1958 (Bonus: After Hours 1950)

Storyville 1018540 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Duke Ellington (p, cond), Cat Anderson, Harold Baker, Ray Nance (t), Clark Terry (t, flhn), Britt Woodman, Quentin Jackson (tb), John Sanders (vtb), Johnny Hodges (as), Russell Procope (as, cl), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Jimmy Hamilton (ts, cl), Harry Carney (bs, cl, bcl), Jimmy Woode (b), Sam Woodyard (d) and Ozzie Bailey (v). Rec. 7 Nov 1958; plus Ellington (p), Hamilton (cl) and Don Byas (ts). Rec. 31 May and 6 June 1950

This is by no means the first collection released posthumously from Ellington's 1958 European tour, and the opening two-thirds of the album may not be the best example of that period. It has its good points, including a live version of the band's mid-1950s arrangement of 'My Funny Valentine' (with trombone solos from Woodman and plunger-muted Jackson) and some notably aggressive readings of 'Rockin' In Rhythm' and 'Diminuendo And Crescendo In Blue' – the impression being accentuated by a balance often favouring the rhythm-section over the brass.

Less good is the fact that tape-speeds don't seem totally consistent from track to track; and, while the notes explain that the original tapes have been lost, and what's here consists of off-air recordings of Danish Radio broadcasts, clearly much of the concert has not survived. On the other hand, it's no disadvantage that there's only one vocal (the Ellington calypso 'What Else Can You Do With A Drum') and that Woodyard's drum feature ('Hi Fi Fo Fum') here consists of only the last third of the piece.

But what's of greater interest is the previously unknown 25-minute 'bonus' material from the band's 1950 European tour. Three-quarters of this derives from an after-hours club session with the rhythm-section-less piano of Ellington on three lengthy numbers, joined by Hamilton and the Continental-resident Don Byas (see Peter Vacher's review in *Jazzwise* 295); the tenorman had joined the band for their tour and here excels himself on a 'Body And Soul' that includes both his typical ballad improvisation and double-tempo work. And Duke is totally unaccompanied on the final six minutes – a double-sided 78rpm disc of which only 10 copies were pressed as a charity competition prize! Not only its rarity should recommend this material, but the quality of the playing, which then reminds you that Ellington's piano contributions during the concert are always worth noticing too. **Brian Priestley**

Back in the ESSR...

Various Artists

Groove Of ESSR: Funk, Disco, Jazz From Soviet Estonia Vol I (1974-1988)

Funk Embassy FER-003RP (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Vol II (1973-84)

FER-008 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Collectively featuring Gunnar Graps, Uno Naissoo, Marju Kuut, Jaan Kumani, Collage and others. Rec.1973-88

As the annual Jazzkaar festival shows, Estonia has both an eager audience for jazz as well as an impressive contemporary talent pool. These two brilliant compilations shine a light on the historical depth of the latter. Covering a pivotal period, from the early 1970s to the mid '80s, when the country was still part of the Soviet Union, the material has a unique blend of local folk and international flavours, making the point that black music, evolving through jazz, soul and funk, found its way to the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic (ESSR), where bands and singers embraced changing times all the while retaining their personal identity.

Certainly, the sound of Uno Naissoo, Jaan Kumani, Collage, Tonis Magi and Gunnar Graps & The Magnetic Band whipping up heavy percussive and dancefloor grooves is a real treat. So too are the reprises of soul anthems such as Earth, Wind & Fire's 'September' and The Commodore's 'Slippery When Wet'.

But what captures the spirit of Estonia as a place of great defiance and imagination is the heavenly voice of Marju Kuut, a national icon, who was willing to take risks under Moscow's beady eye and record poetry such as 'Maskeraad.' Over the two discs a picture emerges of a resourceful, creative country that punches well above its weight.

Kevin Le Gendre

Jazz Artists Guild

Newport Rebels

Candid CAN32132 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

(Coll.pers.) Roy Eldridge, Benny Bailey, Booker Little (t), Jimmy Knepper, Julian Priester (tb), Eric Dolphy (as), Walter Benton (ts), Tommy Flanagan, Kenny Dorham (p), Charles Mingus, Peck Morrison (b), Max Roach, Jo Jones (d) and Abbey Lincoln (v).
Rec. 1 and 11 November 1960

This latest Candid remastered CD and LP stands up well in musical terms, with its backstory and its stylistically mixed personnel relating to the previous year's anti-Newport happening, set up to challenge the apparent commercial excesses of the official festival.

Alongside Mingus (supported by Nat Hentoff, who supervised these studio sessions), Roach was one of the main organisers and his current group including Little is heard on 'Cliff Walk' with the addition of Jo Jones.

The pioneering Basieite is the sole drummer on Abbey Lincoln's one track ('Tain't Nobody's Bizness If I Do') which has backing from Dolphy and Benny Bailey – both Lincoln and Bailey were separately featured on their own Candid albums. Jones is also present throughout the original Side One fronted by Eldridge, comprising two quartet numbers with Mingus and Flanagan plus a medium-fast blues adding Dolphy and Knepper.

The kaleidoscopic nature of the programme mirrors that of the Newport Rebel event, although several attendees such as Coleman Hawkins and Ornette Coleman are not present here, probably for contractual reasons.

The highlights of the resultant album are sufficient to justify its release and reissue, and some of the unusual collaborations are surprisingly satisfying.

Brian Priestley

Harold Land

Choma (Burn)

We Want Sounds WWSLP 87 (LP, DL) ★★★

Harold Land (ts, f), Bill Henderson, Harold Land Jr (p, el p), Bobby Hutcherson (vb, marimba), Reggie Johnson (b), Ndugu and Woody Theus (d). Rec. 1971

By the time this came to be made, Harold Land's rapid rise to national attention with Clifford Brown and Max Roach at the age of 26 was 17 years in the past. He had gone on to record a number of albums under his own name for Contemporary and Pacific Jazz in 1958-60, including *Harold in the Land of Jazz* and the much-reissued *The Fox*.

After co-leading a quintet with Bobby Hutcherson, he signed to Mainstream in 1970 with *A New Shade of Blue*, and this current vinyl re-issue of *Choma* is the sequel. Those who loved the post-bop precision of 'Dark Mood' or the delicacy of 'Ode to Angela' on *New Shade* are in for a shock with the title track of *Choma*. The word for 'burn' in Swahili, it is an outright conflagration, an ugly, sprawling, chaotic mess, powered by the relentless thudding of its two competing drummers with Land's flute almost lost in the proceedings.

Fortunately things improve dramatically on Henderson's composition 'Our Home', with a characteristically powerful, well-shaped tenor solo and similarly accomplished choruses from Henderson on Fender-Rhodes and Hutcherson on vibes. 'Black Caucus' has the tenor on full throttle over both drummers, but here the mix of rhythmic energy and Land's language harks back to Coltrane, in a piece dedicated - after a recent meeting of African-American political activists - to 'the brothers doing it in Washington DC'. It also has a showcase solo for Land Jr.

The shifting form in the opening parts of the closing track, 'Up and Down', interrupts the musical development from time to time, but it has some fine tenor and vibes playing, not entirely helped by the drummers trying to outplay each other, rather than playing for the band. So a curate's egg of an album for sure, but redeemed by 'Our Home'.

Alyn Shipton

Charles Mingus

Incarnations

Candid CAN33122 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Charles Mingus (b) with (coll.pers.) Ted Curson, Lonnie Hillyer, Roy Eldridge (t), Jimmy Knepper, Britt Woodman (tb), Charles McPherson (as), Eric Dolphy (as, bcl), Booker Ervin (ts), Nico Bunick, Paul Bley, Tommy Flanagan (p), Dannie Richmond and Jo Jones (d).
Rec. 20 October and 11 November 1960

Reviewing the second of the two original Mingus releases on Candid in *Jazzwise* 289, I found myself requesting the re-release of *Newport Rebels* (see under Jazz Artists Guild above) and also of the further tracks with Mingus' participation that had first surfaced only during earlier reissue programmes. The latter request is partially satisfied by the present 41-minute compilation – with hopefully more to come – which includes four tracks from the November 1960 session and one total surprise.

The previously released material here complements the *Newport Rebels* album (or vice versa) with two items from the Roy Eldridge set that has Mingus plus Dolphy and Knepper, namely a lengthy rhythm-changes routine 'R&R' and an almost equally long 'Body And Soul'.

The remaining three tracks are all led by Mingus and relying on his current and recent sidemen, with the extremely Parkeresque theme of 'Bugs' (also on rhythm-changes) naturally inspiring good work from McPherson, Hillyer and Ervin. The octet track 'Reincarnation Of A Lovebird (2nd version)' – its title distinguishing it from a sextet performance recorded in October 1960 – has acceptable solo work with a

Harold Land (left) and Bobby Hutcherson

Horace Parlan

slightly lumbering ensemble arrangement that sacrifices the melancholic tone of Mingus's 1957 original.

Rather more ponderous, though, is the surprise track that has eluded all previous reissue programmes, a tentet piece with minimal improvisation that Mingus announces as being based on a standard but disguised "so that I get the royalties", and disguised to such an extent that it's virtually unrecognisable. Here titled 'All The Things You Are (All)', it also bears no resemblance to "Sigmund Freud's wife" (more's the pity). If you're a Mingus completist, you obviously need to hear this, but it sounds like something he might have written in the early 1950s before his signature Jazz Workshops had really taken off.

Brian Priestley

Horace Parlan
Four Classic Albums

AvidJazz AMSC1450 (2 CD) ★★★★

Horace Parlan (p), Tommy Turrentine (t), Stanley Turrentine (ts), George Tucker (b), Al Harewood (d) and Ray Barretto (cga). Rec. 20 April, 14 July, December 1960 and March 1961

Four Blue Note albums, headed by Parlan, the CD1 pair with the Turrentine brothers in the front-line, those with the just the trio collected in CD2. Pianist Parlan (1931-2017) was hampered after suffering from polio, this requiring him to stress his left-hand technique. From 1973 he moved to Copenhagen and gained great success there.

He had the good sense on these rather splendid 1960s recordings to use a bassist and drummer who exactly complemented his relatively sparse but percussive approach. This is apparent on his 'Wadin', a blues, with Tucker's booming sound and wonderful walking style heard first on this, the initial track from *Speaking My Piece*, Harewood tucked in, all concerned intent on swing. Writer Nat Hentoff cites Tucker's 'authoritative groove' and he's right. Tommy Turrentine, a confident player whose career was grounded by addiction, has something of Fats Navarro's bright fluency in his solo attack, his tone marginally more strident, while his brother and co-partner Stanley is 'robustly warm' as Hentoff has it. Their companionable playing and the way they mesh with Parlan, Tucker and Harewood brings everything to life perfectly.

Parlan contributes a number of tunes as do the Turrentines, nothing is wasted or over-prolix, some tracks fading out, the whole effect revealing a kind of innate mastery. I especially liked Booker Ervin's 'Al's Tune', a minor blues, from the second quintet album, *On The Spur of The Moment*, Tucker heard pizzicato. The trio albums came before the quintets chronologically and Parlan's *Us Three* with its churchy theme highlights engaging directness, Tucker again resplendent throughout. More Parlan tunes, including 'Wadin' again, plus standards make me wish I'd heard Parlan live. Too late now, so this will have to do. Don't hesitate.

Peter Vacher

Nina Simone
Blackbird: The Colpix Recordings 1959–1963

SoulMusic Records/Cherry Red QSM8CR5218BX (8 CD) ★★★★★

Nina Simone (p, v), Al Shackman, Phil Orlando (el g), Jimmy Bond, Chris White, Lisle Atkinson (b), Albert 'Tootie' Heath, Bobby Hamilton, Montego Joe (d), The Malcolm Dodds Singers (v) and other uncredited musicians. Rec. 1959–63

Colpix Records, founded in 1958, was a subsidiary of film company Columbia Pictures-Screen Gems. Most of its output consisted of pop songs by movie stars; novelty (Yogi Bear!) and comedy records (Woody Allen's stand-up debut was released on the label); plus spoken word and documentary albums.

The label did however have one *bona fide* musical superstar – a young Nina Simone. Colpix was the pianist/singer's first major label after her short and unhappy stint at Bethlehem, which produced a mega-hit in 'I Loves You Porgy' but no royalties. What is striking about this period in Simone's career is that Colpix ceded all creative control to the artist, allowing her to choose her material and select her backing musicians; this resulted in a run of superb albums that showcased her extraordinary talents, as well as her emerging socio-political concerns.

Although overshadowed by her 'imperial phase' at Philips and RCA (1964–74), the Colpix years marked the first flowerings of Nina as a distinctive artist and jazz giant-cum-activist.

This great-value (around £35-40) and comprehensive box set collects together no fewer than 107 recordings across eight albums from this crucial period: *The Amazing Nina Simone* and *Nina Simone At Town Hall* (1959), *Nina Simone At Newport* (1960), *Forbidden Fruit* (1961), *Nine Simone At The Village Gate* and *Nina Simone Sings Ellington* (1962), *Nina Simone At Carnegie Hall* (1963) and *Folksy Nina* (1964). All come in facsimile sleeves (not very well reproduced, sadly) and bonus tracks; the mastering, by Nick Robbins, is generally very good, resulting in excellent sound.

Add in an informative 36-page booklet (with notes by Nina Simone Appreciation Society founder David Nathan), and you have what is – if you don't have the albums separately – an essential purchase; and even if you *do* own them, it's great to have them all together in one place, in this quality, and with the related singles versions, outtakes, offcuts and unreleased material included. **Kevin Whitlock**

Kenny Wheeler
Angel Song

ECM Luminessence 1607 (2 LP, DL) ★★★★

Kenny Wheeler (t, flhn), Lee Konitz (as), Dave Holland (b) and Bill Frisell (g). Rec. February 1996

Wheeler once told me that the *Angel Song* album took shape out of a series of discussions he had with ECM producer Manfred Eicher. Expressing a desire to record with Lee Konitz, whom he had first seen as a member of the Claude Thornhill Orchestra in the late 1940s, Eicher suggested a trio with Dave Holland, "Which I agreed to," said Wheeler, "But on thinking about it, as I am a bit harmonically orientated, I felt it would be difficult to sustain a whole album without any harmony."

Wheeler suggested John Abercrombie, Eicher suggested Frisell, and it is the latter who appears on this double album. However, Frisell was unable to make Wheeler's major Arts Council tour of the UK with the Angel Song band in 1998, so he asked Abercrombie to step in. In the event, both, in their own uniquely individual ways, were a perfect fit for Wheeler's music.

As a collaboration with the enigmatic Lee Konitz, *Angel Song* was an unqualified success, as this is the alto saxophonist as earnest and willing collaborator; later in life, he was a somewhat irascible one-take artist who was rather circumspect about performing new material.

Here he works well with Wheeler, helping make this an important album in both players' latter day discographies. All nine compositions were by the trumpeter, presenting an opportunity to immerse one's self in his music with their wonderful *ad hoc* structures, a fascination in themselves.

The redesigned packaging of the Luminescence series presents the recordings inside the handsome gatefold pack, not in the gatefold sleeves themselves. You can get them in, but it's a very fiddly job. The vinyl is of better quality and weight than the original release, and the sound is perfect, as befits creativity of such high quality. **Stuart Nicholson**

Classical & World Music Reviews

The editors of our sister music magazines, *Gramophone* and *Songlines*, recommend some of the best new releases this month

Classical

BROUGHT TO YOU BY GRAMOPHONE

L'Arpeggiata/ Christina Pluhar
Wonder Women

Erato

The booklet notes to this release open with words by Maddalena Casulana, the 16th-century composer, lutenist and singer, something of Renaissance wonderwoman; but instead of wearing a cape, she plays a lute.

On the evidence of this disc, L'Arpeggiata director Christina Pluhar is cut from the same cloth as Casulana. We're told that the album is a tribute to female composers of the 17th century as well as a celebration of 'all aspects of womanhood, and women with all their talents'. And so it is.

There's music, as you might expect, from now-household 17th Century names Francesca Caccini, Barbara Strozzi and Isabella Leonarda. But there are also wonderful surprises thrown into the mix, including traditional songs from Mexico and Italy – and seven arrangements by Pluhar. Much narrative ground is covered, too, with everything from heroines to sorceresses.

All four vocal soloists are exceptional. Belgian soprano Céline Scheen in Strozzi's 'Che si può fare?' is an obvious highlight. Mezzo-soprano Benedetta Mazzucato is equally stunning in Leonarda's 'Nive puer'. Her effortless *melisma* brings to life the exquisite word-painting on 'cantans', and if you could bottle the sound of her humming, the cupboards of parents dealing with newborns would be full.

There are the usual swirling *chaconne* bass lines that we've come to expect and love from L'Arpeggiata, and the quiet rhythmic funk of 'La Lloroncita' is exactly what is needed to break the spell. **Mark Seow**

Yuja Wang
The Vienna Recital

DG

At first, the programme for this recital might seem haphazard, with two excerpts from Iberia separated by Scriabin and Kapustin and followed by Beethoven and Ligeti. But as Yuja Wang fuses the disparate music into a single, coherent arc, she annihilates any fears of randomness. How does she do it?

Certainly, we're held in her grip by the electricity of her playing, which gives no chance to demur. Precipitous tempos are part of it. More important is her variety of articulation, including bold accents that break apart the music's regularity and shock us into attention. And more important still are the clarity of detail, the dynamic range and the timbral variety that sharpen the music's profile. The results are often surprising. The clipped opening of Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No 18*, a flick rather than a sigh, introduces a journey dotted with unfamiliar landscapes.

More stimulating, though, is the way she unites the programme by bringing out the composers' shared delight in textural play. Rarely have the intricacies of Albéniz's and Ligeti's interweaving voices emerged with such resilience – but the same is true of her Beethoven. Here, what can sound like conventional accompaniments in other hands bristle with interest, as she pulls surprises from the background like a magician pulling rabbits from a hat. Few other pianists, except Glenn Gould and Marc-André Hamelin, can create such a sense of conversation and confrontation among superimposed lines. Another triumph for the pianist. **Peter J Rabinowitz**

World Music

BROUGHT TO YOU BY SONGLINES

Varijashree Venugopal
Vari

GroundUP Music ★★★★

Innovation borne of mastery of tradition is a central tenet of GroundUP, the record label founded by Snarky Puppy's Michael League. And nowhere is this better exemplified on their roster than by *Vari*, the debut from prodigiously talented Carnatic singer/flautist Varijashree Venugopal, who as a toddler could allegedly recognise over 100 Carnatic *ragas*, and was performing in concert aged four.

The flawlessness of her vocals – with their precise melody and rhythm and emotional expression – astound from the off, framed by a Carnatic ensemble on violin, keys, *tambura* drone and percussion instruments including *mridangam*, with League playing bass and a bass synth that wheel and soar.

Still in her early 30s, Venugopal has previously collaborated with the musically adventurous likes of Bobby McFerrin, and it's her willingness to venture outside the classical Carnatic form, pulling in threads from other musics, improvising even more, that gives *Vari* its wings.

League, co-producing with percussionist Pramath Kiran, adds impressionistic effects enhancing Venugopal's unhurried, perfectly pitched vocals. Opener 'Dream' is float-on-a-cloud gorgeous, a vulnerable, undulating flow of ascending and descending scales; 'Harivaa Jhari' is a sure-fire hit with clever tempo changes and impassioned delivery that warrants repeated listening. **Jane Cornwell**

Track To Try: 'Harivaa Jhari'

Sam Anning
Earthen

Earshift Music ★★★★

Sam Anning is an Australian bassist-composer who studied in New York, before performing alongside such legendary jazz players as saxophonist Joe Lovano and fellow bassist Charlie Haden.

Returning to Melbourne in 2015, the last decade has seen award-winning Anning regularly lead his own groups, and become a much sought-after player for many ensembles, That included a three-year stint backing the iconic Australian Aboriginal singer-songwriter Archie Roach, prior to his passing in 2022. Dedicated to Archie, this release – Anning's third with a septet – finds him borrowing a couple of Roach's melody lines, but it's mainly a reflective and well-composed jazz-based excursion. Encouraging his cohorts to share the spotlight, the most prominent players are veteran tenor saxophonist Julien Wilson on 'Transitive States', alto player Carl Mackey ('Moonland') and the emotive pianist Andrea Keller ('Kicking, Not Screaming'). And the magnificent, slow-building 'Eleventy Million (for Auggie Bruten)' features some truly remarkable and delicate playing from trumpeter Mat Jodrell. Anning's basslines are consistently creative, but it's his intricate compositions, as well as his subtle production touch, which really shine. A worthy tribute to the memory of Archie Roach. **Seth Jordan**

Track To Try: 'Eleventy Million (For Auggie Bruten) (Feat Mat Jodrell)'

jazzwise

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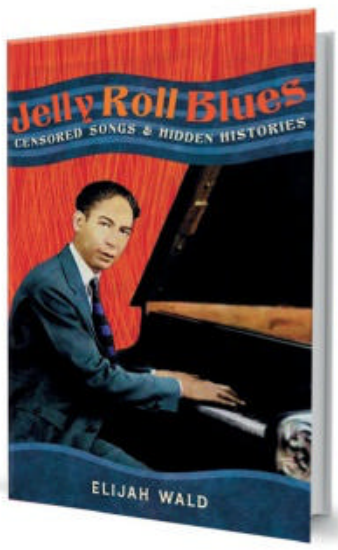


Purveyor of filth: Jelly Roll Morton with Los Angeles-area musicians at the Cadillac Club, circa 1917 or 1918. Left to right: 'Common' Sence Ross, Albertine Pickins, Morton, Ada 'Bricktop' Smith, Eddie Rucker and Mabel Watts

Jelly Roll Blues
Elijah Wald
Hachette HB £27.98

Subtitled *Censored Songs & Hidden Histories*, American music historian Elijah Wald uses long-suppressed recordings Jelly Roll Morton made with Alan Lomax in 1938 for the Library of Congress as a launchpad to investigate what might be called "the filth and the fury" that the pioneers of early jazz and blues were steeped in.

The "suppressed" recordings Morton made found him singing graphic sexual content – employing what's often known as 'the dozens': rhyming boasts and insults (yes, a precursor to rap!) that he'd learnt in the bordellos of Storyville. Lomax encouraged Morton to sing such ditties, fascinated as he was by African American vernacular culture; but knew that obscenity laws meant they could not then be made publicly available.

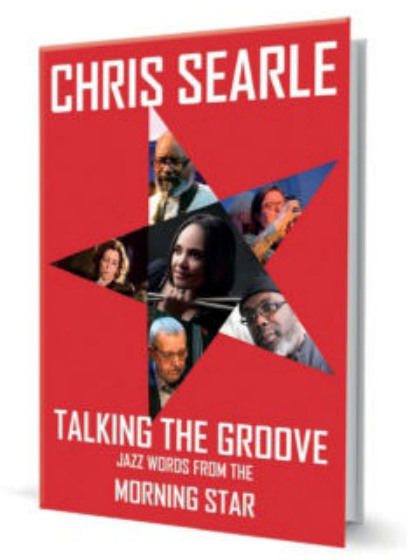
Times change, and when Rounder issued a box-set of these recordings earlier this century, it provided many fascinating insights into life and music in early 20th Century New Orleans.

Wald, who as a writer on music always looks for new angles to explore, uses these recordings to investigate how jazz and blues, when performed in black bars by Morton, Buddy Bolden, Kid Ory, Memphis Minnie and others, was often a celebration of prostitution, sexual pleasure and wild abandonment: a freedom beyond the confinement Jim Crow America enforced.

While there are many books on early jazz/blues, Wald's ability to think laterally and research beyond obvious sources means he links what Morton and contemporaries were singing of with other African diaspora communities (in Cuba, Trinidad, Brazil, etc) while noting how certain dirty rhymes reach back to folk ballads the likes of Robert Burns recorded.

He also notes that jazz historians have long emphasised instrumental prowess, while tending to ignore the relationship of skilled word play to the divergence of the form – jazz and blues were, he reminds us, once the street music of impoverished African American communities. *Jelly Roll Blues* is then a book that provides much to think about alongside a potted, contemporary biography of Morton, one of the pivotal figures in early modern American popular music.

Garth Cartwright



Talking The Groove: Jazz Words From The Morning Star
Chris Searle
Jazz In Britain PB/2 CD £16.99

For the past 94 years, the *Morning Star* – known until 1966 as *The Daily Worker* – has been the daily newspaper of choice for Britain's communists. Despite the collapse of the USSR, the discrediting of communism as a moral political force and some woefully tin-eared positions (eg, on the 1956 Hungarian uprising), the collectively-owned *Morning Star* (which is still sold at newsagents) has continued to plough its lonely furrow in the face of mainstream indifference and occasional mockery.

Although as a Left libertarian, I would take issue with many of the *Star*'s positions, I do admire the paper for hanging on in there, and for providing some much-needed diversity in the UK media landscape. It's also the only Leftist newspaper actually worth reading, unlike the shitrags pushed out by the likes of the Socialist Workers Party. And, there is a good deal to admire in the *Star*'s culture coverage.

One of the paper's biggest assets in this regard is Chris Searle, a lover of cricket, poetry and jazz, who has written for the Star for decades. At the age of 80, he is still a regular at (for example, Cafe OTO) concerts in London, and he still writes prolifically on jazz. His pieces are always worth reading and he's an astute and perceptive commentator on the music. As a result, it might be argued – I certainly would – that the *Morning Star* has the best jazz coverage of any daily in Britain.

All the other papers – with the exception, perhaps, of the *Financial Times* – have largely dumped jazz: the supposedly 'intellectual' *Guardian,* has mostly shunted the music out into the margins in favour of screeds on mainstream pap; and the *Telegraph*, *Times*, and the tabloids seem to show no interest in jazz whatsoever. But Searle continues to advocate for jazz, and to energetically push new and young talent in his writings for the paper.

Talking the Groove is Searle's third book on the subject and collects together many of his more recent pieces, going up to February of this year and also covering the weird, dark days of the Covid-19 pandemic. Subjects covered go from the mainstream (John McLaughlin at Ronnie's) to the more *outré* (William Parker) in a variety of forms: gig and album reviews, interviews, think pieces... all are short and to the point, often containing real insights, but also making for ideal 'dip in' reading.

Importantly, what comes across in this collection is Searle's passion for, and connection with, the music; he understands the importance of the artist's struggle for creative (and often, social and political) freedom as a crucial driving force in jazz. And it seems that Searle didn't get the memo about jazz 'being dead', because reading this collection, it seems as if the music is as alive as ever – for those who can be bothered to go out and look for it.

Like all of JiB's publications, *Talking The Groove* comes with a musical supplement created especially for, and only available with, this book – an excellent double CD compilation featuring the likes of Chris McGregor, Brotherhood of Breath, Splinters (a group featuring Tubby Hayes), Trevor Watts, Bruce Turner, John Stevens and others. Splendid, also essential, stuff. **Kevin Whitlock**

THE PLAYER

LINLEY HAMILTON

Trumpeter, broadcaster and co-owner of County Down-based jazz venue Magy's Farm (see page 13)... **Linley Hamilton** speaks to **David Gallant** about his life in music – and his favourite instruments over the years

"I think there is something magical about putting a mouthpiece into a trumpet and setting it on your face," says Linley Hamilton. "Once the connection is made, it is at one with the body – the breathing system, diaphragm, airstream, lips and then the throwing of the air through the instrument and through the bell.

"The instrument, to all intents, becomes part of the body and we are at one as we make the music, project the sound and generate the narrative to what we play: musically, dynamically, emotionally. It's quite a feeling! It's personal."

Hamilton picked up a school trumpet in primary school when he was nine: "It was a learner's model, but within the first six months of playing I got a Yamaha model, medium bore, which kept me going until I bought my first real trumpet, a Yamaha 8310.

"I developed a love for music through school ensembles and brass bands and came to jazz in my mid-teens. I had peripatetic lessons from a teacher named Hugh Megarrell who was very influential; and private lessons from a lead trumpet player called Bob Dawson, who turned me onto the instrument for real.

"I was very busy with not only school bands, but also orchestras and an amateur big band, a brass band, and a small Dixieland band. At the back end of my teens I got into the Irish Youth Jazz Orchestra under the tutelage of Bobby Lamb, and that was an incredible experience."

I was keen to know who Hamilton was listening to and being influenced by back then.

"Freddie Hubbard – my all-time hero," he answers. "He just had so much going on – the huge range, the fast subdivisions and incredible flexibility, the musical ideas, the individual personal traits he would regularly employ, the infectious personality and the sporadic times he would cross over into other genres like with 'Zanzibar' for Billy Joel. Most influential was his work with Blakey, and his own albums of the 1960s and 70s like *Ready for Freddie*, *Hub Tones* and *Sky Dive*. And I also love Clifford Brown – such a brilliant player and the jazz language he used, easy to understand when transcribing and studying note choices. A very fluid player with lyrical traits as well as technical brilliance."

Hamilton went on to read Civil Engineering at Queen's University, Belfast.: "At that stage I had no inkling of a professional career, which didn't happen until about five years later when jazz became a focus and I toured with The Commitments and other Irish bands."

We get on to Hamilton's choice of trumpet: "I picked up that Yamaha 8310 after blowing one in a big band rehearsal in Dublin. It was easier to play than the horn I was playing and a couple of guys in the section had them. I did a load of records, and memorable gigs with that horn: including a concert with Van Morrison in the 1990s at Belfast City Hall when Bill Clinton was in Belfast to kick-start the Peace Process. There were around 200,000 people around the Hall, which has a capacity of abot 500. A profound day all round... After that, I moved onto a second-hand Taylor Chicago Concept II trumpet. I got to meet and talk to Andy Taylor a lot in subsequent years, and in 2010 bought the Taylor Chicago Light, which is my current working trumpet. I followed up with a Taylor 'Phat Boy' Flugel in 2016."

> ***"I did a concert with Van Morrison in the 1990s at Belfast City Hall when Bill Clinton was in Belfast to kick-start the Peace Process"***

Although Hamilton is still active on all three Taylor horns, his current horn of choice is a Taylor Chicago 46 II VR.

"It's much lighter than the heavier Chicago I used. It has a direct sound which is so good in sections, but works well for jazz and has helped me to sculpt an individual tone as a soloist in various jazz settings. It's a medium bore, is free-blowing, and has a fast, quiet valve action.

"I've just heard that Andy Taylor is planning to retire at the end of this year. What a career. He experimented, kept pushing the boundaries, testing, finding new solutions, designing original looking and sounding horns that have been played by many of the world's top players. What a legacy. What a legend."

We're onto mouthpieces: "I played a Yamaha Bobby Shew Jazz for years, and eventually got Andy Taylor to customise a mouthpiece based on this for me. It's a 16.5 mm inner diameter, medium cup and back-bore which services all the playing I do really well."

Although Hamilton's music is firmly rooted in post-bop, he is not adverse to employing a pedalboard when the occasion demands.

He elaborates: "I use the pedalboard in certain fusion and pop-solo settings, with a foot pedal which switches between the pre-programmed reverbs on a Pedaltrain Nano board with an MXR Carbon Copy Bright Delay Pedal, MXR Blue Box Distortion, a DB500 passive DI box and a Cry Baby Wah."

And what of the future? "My life has been at one with the music as I have become its servant and evangelist, and I look forward to continuing to serve the community until my last breath."

Photo: Keery Irvine

Instrument News & Reviews

David Gallant checks out the latest instruments and accessories for serious amateur and professional musicians

Techra Donati 5B and X-Carb 7A carbon fibre drumsticks

Many moons ago, we tested a carbon fibre double bass bow, the results of which were not exactly positive; so it was fascinating to see how these new Techra carbon fibre drum sticks would perform when compared to the standard wooden sticks. As with the carbon fibre bow, the physical make-up of carbon fibre is in complete contrast to that of wood, so we were interested to see if there were any sonic differences; and if so, how marked and positive or negative they would be.

The Italian company sent *Jazzwise* the signature Virgil Donati 5B and an 'X Carb' 7A model. Both models are hollow, and at 61.6 grams come in at around 20% lighter than the equivalent wooden stick. A small rubber cap is supplied which covers the tip of the stick, which Techra claims will help to absorb vibration.

In practice, the lighter stick was clearly noticeable and only took a snort time to get used to, and actually, we rather liked the lighter feel. Sonically, we were surprised that the carbon fibre stick produces a slightly duller tone than a wood stick. It's only a subtle difference, but it *is* noticeable. On the ride cymbal, the carbon tip produces a slightly brighter tone when compared with the nylon tipped wood stick. But again, it's only a subtle difference.

We wondered how the carbon stick would respond on a snare drum 'rim click'. The tone was definitely duller than the wooden stick, but it performed well volume-wise. As for the vibration absorption rubber tip, we could not detect any difference in the feel and performance to that of a wooden stick.

Having given the carbon sticks a good run for their money, we were pleased to see that there were no 'chips' evident on the shoulder, despite numerous cymbal crashes.

Techra tells us that it pairs the sticks 'perfectly' and claims 'balanced weight', the latter of which we can certainly vouch for. The company also claims that the sticks deliver a 'powerful sound' - true. And of course there is always the 'eco- sustainable' argument and the benefits of durability and longevity.

Reasonably priced at around £12.50 a pair, not only are they good value, but might also surprise drummers who have always been unconvinced by carbon fibre sticks.

www.techra-drumsticks.com/en/

Odyssey Debut Flugelhorn

We have previously reviewed and tested instruments from the Odyssey Premiere range, which proved to be very good value for money. So the updated, upgraded Debut range was an interesting development.

Very much a 'beginners' instrument', this flugelhorn comes in a shiny yellow brass finish and is robust with a good build quality. The braces supporting the bell are sturdy, although they remain quite delicate, whilst the three water keys are of the traditional external cantilevered variety with cork heads.

It's noticeable that the Debut has a bigger bore size than our house Taylor, which along with a shorter basic bottom sprung valve block immediately suggests that this Flugel is fitted with a trumpet valve block, which is not uncommon at this price point, as it saves going to the trouble of making a specific Flugel block. The consequence of this is that it reduces the differential between the cylindrical lead pipe into the block and the conical "wrap' of tubing curling out to the bell, and is one of the reasons why cheaper Flugels often sound 'trumpety' with a harsher and brighter tone.

We fitted the supplied Odyssey mouthpiece with its shallow cup (no cup size marked), the purpose of which we suspect is to help with achieving the range. As expected, the tone is harsh and bright by Flugel standards. However, fitting our house Taylor mouthpiece, although slightly loose due to the smaller bore size of the Taylor lead pipe, allowed us to achieve a warmer, fuller and darker tone - in fact much more Flugel- like. This we put down to the deeper cup and the heavier and more bulky Taylor.

Overall, the instrument plays well (particularly with the Taylor mouthpiece), although there is quite a lot of resistance. The valves work smoothly and with a bit of a workout they should bed in nicely, The tuning slide trigger on the third valve has a nice smooth action, and the tuning seems to be fine across the full range

The Debut comes in a good-sized, lightweight, traditional rectangular case with a grab handle, two adjustable straps and 'D' rings, and is covered in a fine weatherproof, nylon denier fabric. There is a 3/4 zip to the main compartment and a smaller one to the front pocket. The pre-formed interior is covered in a velvety material and not only houses the instrument, but also has a couple of mouthpiece slots.

The Odyssey Debut Flugel is a good beginner's horn that will serve the student well through the early exam grades, thereafter upgrading to the Odyssey Premiere or another comparable instrument.

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Live Reviews

Cheltenham highlights (clockwise from top left): Snarky Puppy; Brad Mehldau; Kit Downes and Norma Winstone; Theo Croker and Charlotte Keefe

Photos: Tim Dickerson (Cheltenham), Mark Allen (Shabaka)

Cheltenham Jazz Festival

Various venues, Cheltenham

Cheltenham continued its deft balancing act of star jazz names such as Courtney Pine, Dee Dee Bridgewater and Brad Mehldau alongside the overtly commercial – Sophie Ellis-Bextor and UB40 packing the Big Top.

Yet it was the Parabola Arts Centre (now co-curated by Alexandria Carr and Tony Dudley-Evans) that gave the event its deep jazz angles, kicking things off with young pianist (and milliner) Sultan Stevenson's trio. Influences acknowledged included McCoy Tyner and Bheki Mseleku, most evident in Stevenson's strong left hand, but the elaborated gospel hymn 'He Has Made Me Whole' also showed a fund of lyrical ideas. Drummer David Ola's Lukumi Project – a festival commission – brought jazz horns together with a trio of steel pans for a themed suite telling the story of the African Diaspora. Held together by Emanuel Adeniro's indefatigable bass guitar the music had an inspiring vigour sometimes at odds with more sombre themes but always a joy to hear, with Marlon Hibbert's excellent tenor pan soloing a revelation.

On paper, there's very little to John Zorn's *300 Bagatelles*, but Sam Eastmond's big band arrangements conjured enthrallingly sprawling and turbulent tapestries. Thanks to the players' collective fearlessness the music surged between tight structures, jarring counterpoints and complete freedom while soloists persevered across the changes. Especially impressive were Asha Parkinson's tenor, notably in frenzied dialogue with Moss Freed's guitar, and Charlotte Keefe's rasping trumpet interjections. There was certainly no less talent on display in the National Youth Jazz Orchestra's collaboration with pianist/composer Nikki Yeoh (Parkinson herself being a recent NYJO graduate). Yeoh's piece 'Speechmik', built on the rhythms and cadences of speech in different languages, was a clever idea providing a wide range of stylistic opportunities for individuals to shine. In a touching tribute to Yeoh's mentor the late Ian Carr, a crackling arrangement of Carr's 'Wardance' provided a brilliant orchestral encore to their set.

The PAC auditorium's intimate space was best exploited by Kit Downes and Norma Winstone's elegant duo, two distinctive stylists comfortably finding common ground. While Downes was given plenty of space to explore the music as a soloist his sensitivity as accompanist to the strength and poise of Winstone's vocals really impressed. It all came particularly together on John Taylor's 'Fly The Wind', Downe's harmonic clarity recalling the composer's own vivid freedom woven around Winstone's lyrics and scat singing. They make a lovely couple. Sadly the space backfired somewhat for Dave Douglas and Trish Clowes' Eyes Up quintet, the acoustic privilege for Joel Barford's drums and Douglas' trumpet at times overwhelming Clowes' more modulated tenor sax tone. The music was fine, of course, with the drunken swagger of 'The Night Has 500 Eyes' especially enjoyable. Disappointment marred un.procedure's commissioned performance with strings and wind, however, as post-Brexit rules trapped Cassie Kinoshi in Berlin. While samples took her place in the electro-acoustic flow of music and animated visuals Kinoshi's commanding stage presence was definitely missed.

And, of course, there were a few temptations beyond the PAC, with Theo Croker's much anticipated Jazz Arena set a real pleasure. The trumpeter is an adept producer who managed that rare feat of artfully mixing electronics and samples as part of an engaging performance, helped by the brilliant piano of Idris Frederick and ebullient thunderstorm drummer Jeremiah Collier. They made suave and contemporary music with real character. And while Snarky Puppy are crowd-pleasers they cranked up the volume and stretched out some excellent solos, especially from trumpeter Jay Jennings, to prove stadium sized jazz and improv surprises aren't mutually exclusive.

Over on the main Town Hall stage young double bass player Felix Moseholm really caught the eye for his precise economy and lyrical turn of phrase. "He'll go far" someone near me remarked - but surely playing with Brad Mehldau is the definition of 'far'? Mehldau, of course, was utterly brilliant, playing to pin-drop silence as an attentive capacity audience drank in every note and were rewarded with, among other treats, his classic post-cocktail treatment of 'Secret Love'. It was one of those gigs to be remembered for a long, long time.

Tony Benjamin

Shabaka Hutchings

Barbican, London

Shabaka Hutchings has been on an extraordinary musical journey over the past year. Summer 2023 saw him part ways with his electro-jazz trio The Comet is Coming, and the turn of the New Year came with the radical announcement that he would be giving up the tenor saxophone entirely.

This gig at The Barbican was therefore far more than just a launch of his latest album *Perceive Its Beauty, Acknowledge Its Grace*. It was an unveiling of his transformed creative vision – an artistic rebirth. Gone was the muscular, macho tenor giant and that ferocious metallic sound. Here instead was a much more introspective, softly spoken artist who is pushing both his instrumental discipline and creative horizons to new extremes.

Almost every tune featured a new wind instrument from around the globe: the

Japanese *shakuhachi*, a Native American drone flute, an enormous contrabass bamboo flute, a Bulgarian *tilinko*, a clarinet... Shabaka's breath control was impeccable, and he made each sing with a unique woody timbre that evoked sounds of forests and ancestral spirits. He was particularly impressive during the solo moments where he created captivating flows of energy with cascading rhythms and hypnotic looping melodies.

Shabaka's band played a crucial role in realising this new sound. Elliot Galvin on piano and Hinako Omori on synths and keyboards used a variety of acoustic and sampled effects to achieve a rich array of transcendent soundscapes. The sonic effect created by the two harpists, Miriam Adefris and Alina Bzhezhinska, was mesmerising and gave a shimmering harmonic depth to the gig. Guitarist Dave Okumu joined the band at around the halfway mark, adding yet another layer to the mix, and vocalist Eska Mtungwazi gave a soaring vocal performance on the tune 'Living'. This was a masterclass in technical discipline, and a triumph of creative imagination. **Tom Spargo**

Bill Frisell Trio

Bradshaw Hall, Birmingham Conservatoire

Birmingham's Stoney Lane Records don't do things by halves. For this first foray into live music promotion, they set the bar high by booking guitar legend Bill Frisell's long-established trio with bassist Thomas Morgan and drummer Rudy Royston. On the bare wooden Bradshaw Hall stage the three seemed huddled together like wagons on a wide prairie. After Frisell's few introductory words they seemed unaware of their capacity audience, launching into long and seamless segues of tunes sketched in the guitarist's trademark deconstructive style.

Their easy collective freedom left almost no opportunity to applaud a tune or solo: things shifted and drifted along, ideas blossoming between them. Tunes came in and out of focus: 'Shenandoah' gradually assembled out of its component phrases, each given the individual attention of the master (dis)arranger. A multi-layered cacophony of loops gave birth to 'Straight No Chaser', its methodical blues riff disrupted while the groove sustained. And so it went, more or less uninterrupted, for the best part of two hours – an astonishing feat of musical stamina that never flagged in inventiveness.

Was there even a set list? The guitarist seemed spontaneously led by his own musical logic while Morgan's ability to anticipate that process was uncanny and well matched by Royston's quick-witted restraint. The tone and tempo rarely changed, there were no fancy time signatures, only timely dynamic shifts. Frisell is the doyen of nuance and embellishment and the overall effect was captivatingly easy listening. Teasing the audience with the opening phrase of 'In My Life' it soon became clear it was simply that phrase he was going to play, drifting away into a rolling palm wine guitar groove to end the set.

As he unshackled his customised Telecaster with a rare smile there was no sign that Frisell was fatigued, more that – his work done – it was time to move on. For Stoney Lane, however, the challenge is how to follow that... **Tony Benjamin**

Bill Frisell Trio

XJAZZ Festival

Various Venues, Berlin

Berlin is a city with a fiercely independent spirit. From cavernous warehouse techno to its soul-influenced improvised music scene, the German capital's cultural output thrives in underground, DIY spaces, honing attitudes that prioritise community over the power of the establishment.

Nowhere is this collective spirit more apparent than at XJAZZ festival. Operating on a shoestring budget, the week-long event celebrated its 10th edition in May with a polished, globe-trotting roster of performances taking place across a cluster of intimate venues in Kreuzberg.

The programming was as varied as it was thematically considered. A strong focus was placed on the improvised music of the African diaspora, with Ghanaian Frafra gospel singer Florence Adooni performing a riotous Friday afternoon set on the sun-dappled outdoor stage. Backed by blaring horn fanfares, her show peaked with the call-and-response rendition of 'Otoma da Naba'. West African bassist Manou Gallo meanwhile delivered a healthy dose of funk on Saturday evening, filling the main Festaal club stage with the infectious thump of her slapped and syncopated lines. Closer to home, British nine-piece Nubiyan Twist (pictured) followed Gallo, delivering a fast-paced journey through the diaspora, traversing the afrobeat of 'If I Know', as well as *mbira* melodies and West African polyrhythms.

While these international acts were crowd-pleasers, it was the combination of electronics and improvisation in the lineup that felt like the most apt take on jazz performance in Berlin. Channelling the city's rich electronic music history by combining the grid-based structures of programmed melodies and beats with the free-flowing unpredictability of improvisation, several acts produced invigorating sets. The turntable scratching and live sampling of local group Lord of the Amazing Panther expertly remixed instantly-recognisable hooks from tracks like Ginuwine's 'Pony' and Blackstreet's 'No Diggity' into intricate and transformed instrumentals, while singer and producer Jitwam's set soared through radiating synths, thumping grooves and earthy basslines to play like a raw, intuitive interpretation of classic Chicago house.

Two acts in particular reached new heights. UK group Portico Quartet artfully interweaved triggered electronic percussion, processed hang drum melodies and fuzzing synth pads with keening live soprano sax, double bass and drums. Jamming on program-heavy tracks from records like 2017's *Art In The Age of Automaton* and 2021's *Monument*, the group grew dark and heavy, touching on gritty techno atmospherics during an extended version of 'Impressions'.

Norwegian saxophonist Benedik Giske, meanwhile, delivered one of the most unique and emotive shows of the festival. Taking to the stage of the laser and smoke-filled Emmauskirche, he produced an astounding array of otherworldly sounds purely from his tenor saxophone. Placing mics on the instrument in three separate positions to pick up the thump of his fingers on the keys as percussion, as well as the high register, synth-like squeals of his thrumming reed, and a clarion mid-tone of pure melody, Giske employed circular breathing to create unfurling streams of competing rhythm, harmonics and undertones.

Somehow managing to embody funereal drones, pounding percussion, whispers of quiet intimacy and screeching freedom all in his breath, Giske kept his audience rapt in the church space, transcending as the reverb bounced along the walls and through our bodies. It was ultimately the perfect encapsulation of the XJAZZ ethos: unique, unfiltered and unexpected, a motto that seems to stand for Berlin's wider culture as much as for this independent gem of a festival.

Ammar Kalia

Photos: Tony Benjamin, Akim Karpach (bottom)

Gig Guide JULY 24

Rosie Hanley previews the must-see gigs and concerts. Send future listings to **roseanne.hanley@gmail.com**

Listings are free, but due to space restrictions cannot be guaranteed to appear – expanded gig listings can be found at **www.jazzwise.com/gig-guide.**
To advertise your event, contact Ros McRae on ros@jazzwise.com

MONDAY

1 Michael Young Trio
Engine Room, High Street West, Sunderland

1 Will Barry
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

1 Sam Braysher Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

1 Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

1 Pete Allen Band with Denny Illet Jr
The Conservative Club, Radway Place, Sidmouth

1 Joabe Reis
World Heart Beat Embassy Gardens, 3 Ponton Road, London SW11

TUESDAY

2 Enrico Tomasso Quartet
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking

2 The London Vocal Project
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

2 Arturo O'Farrill Afro Latin Jazz Quintet
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

2 Magpie Trio
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY

3 Adam Glasser Trio
Swansea Jazz Club, Cu Mumbles, 7 Castleton Walk Arcade, Newton Road, Swansea

3 Claire Cope
Jazz at the Lescar, Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield

3 Endea Owens and the Cookout
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

3 Mark Nightingale and Callum Au
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

3 Francesca Confortini
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

3 Jessica Ackerley, Maddalena Ghezzi and Eli Wallace
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

3 Beverley Beirne
Seven Arts, 31 Harrogate Road, Leeds

THURSDAY

4 Battersea Jazz Festival: Hugo Jennings Big Band
The Clapham Grand, 21-25 St John's Hill, London SW11

4 Whiplash
Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2

4 Matt Rattcliffe's Unity
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

4 Josh Milan
Jazz Cafe, 5 Parkway, London NW1

4 Jo Harrop
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

4 Jon Regen
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

4-21 Buxton International Festival: Ian Shaw, Zoe Rahman, Hejira and more
Various venues, Buxton, Derbyshire

4 Tim Garland and Jason Rebello
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

4 John Williamson
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

FRIDAY

5 Joe Webb
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

5 Daniel Garcia Trio
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

5-6 Michael Lington
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

5 Mysterious Travellers
Derby Jazz, Hound Dog, 6 Friar Gate, Derby

Hiromi and her Sonicwonder Band at Love Supreme Jazz Festival, 5-7 July

5-7 Love Supreme Jazz Festival: Hiromi, Cécile McLorin Salvant, Christian McBride and more
Glynde Place, East Sussex

5 Abbie Finn Trio
Saltburn Community Hall, Albion Terrace, Saltburn by the Sea

5 Pete Allen
Well Cottage, Badminton Estate, Gloucestershire

5 Jonny Phillips and Giorgio Sercei
The Hub at St Mary's, Market Square, Lichfield

SATURDAY

6 Warren James
St Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington

6 Gary Reader's MOJA
Derby Jazz, Electric Daisy, 1-4 Bold Lane, Derby

6 Rob Barron Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

6 Olatuja
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

6 Tyne Valley Big Band
Greenside Community Centre, Greenside Road, Ryton

6 Abbie Finn Trio
Vault, East Row, Darlington

6 Experience Beck
Music Spoken Here at The Marrs Bar, 12 Pierpoint Street, Worcester

6 Carlo Muscat
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY

7 London Jazz Orchestra
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

7 The Terraplanes
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

7 Russ Morgan Quartet
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

7 BJF: Petra Haller Trio
St Mary's Church, The Moorings, Battersea Church Road, London SW11

7 Ben Martin Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton

7 James Hudson
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

7 Giles Strong Quartet
Central Bar, Half Moon Lane, Gateshead

7 Liane Carroll
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

7 John Dickson Quartet
Southampton Modern Jazz Club, 74 London Road, Southampton

7 Gary Reader's MOJA
Derby Jazz, Normanton Park, Warwick Avenue, Derby

MONDAY

8 Emile Hinton with Strings
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

8-9 Madeline Bell
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

TUESDAY

9 Mark Winkler
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

9 Joe Farnsworth Quartet
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking

9 Dan Reinstein
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY

10 Allison Adams Tucker
Fougou Music, Livermead Cliff Hotel, Seafront, Torbay Road, Torquay

10 George Platt Trio and Pendetive
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

10-13 Marcus Miller
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

10 Cal Tjader, Stan Getz Sextet
Fleece Jazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Colchester

10 Simon Lasky
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

10 BD Lenz Trio
Swansea Jazz Club, Cu Mumbles, 7 Castleton Walk Arcade, Newton Road, Swansea

THURSDAY

11 Dave Gordon Trio
Hidden Rooms, 7b Jesus Lane, Cambridge

12-14 Swanage Jazz Festival: Zoe Rahman, Gary Crosby, Liane Carroll, Art Themen and more

Various venues, Swanage

This year marks the 33rd year of the Swanage Jazz Festival and the programme includes 50 bands in the main ticketed side of the festival as well as a new 'Sound of Jazz to Come' stage, showcasing new names on the scene. Festival standout names include pianist Zoe Rahman (pictured), vocalists Ian Shaw and Liane Carroll, saxophonist Emma Rawicz's Jazz Orchestra and Brit-jazz bass heavyweight Gary Crosby, who appears with his Mingus Moves project.

18 Theo Croker

Glasshouse, St Mary's Square, Gateshead Quays, Gateshead

Trumpeter Theo Croker is a leading figure in the international contemporary music scene. He's known for his fearless, multi-dimensional and innovative sound, which lately sees him incorporating live electronics and samples into his music. He's the grandson of legendary trumpeter Don Cheatham and has worked with likes of Dee Dee Bridgewater, Ari Lennox and Jill Scott, spanning multiple genres, including jazz, hip-hop, pop and R&B. In 2023 he released five-track EP *By The Way* with Ego Ella May and D'Leau. Croker's technique is grounded in the tradition with a modern twist, all backed by his talented young band.

11 Quartet con Alma
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

11-14 Wigan International Jazz Festival: Ben Holder, Paul Higgs, Steve King Big Band and more
The Village on the Green, Woods Road, Wigan

11 Gretchen Parlato and Lionel Loueke
Kings' Place, 90 York Way, London N1

11 John East
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

11 Loz Speyer (evening) Shirley Smart (early evening)
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

FRIDAY

12-13 Hamish Stuart
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

12 BJF: Shades of Shearing
St Mary's Church, The Moorings, Battersea Church Road, London SW11

12-21 Edinburgh Jazz and Blues Festival: Fergus McCreadie, Laura Jurd, Matt Carmichael and more
Various venues, Edinburgh

12 Scary Pockets
KOKO, 1a Camden High Street, London NW1

12 Nimbus Sextet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

12-14 Mostly Jazz Funk and Soul Festival: Nubiyan Twist, Yussef Dayes, Mr Scruff and more
Moseley Park, Birmingham

12 Malika Collective
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

12-14 Burton Agnes Jazz and Blues Festival Burton Agnes Hall, Rudston Road, Driffield

12 John Crawford Quintet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton

12 Ferg Island Quartet
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

SATURDAY

13 BJF: Baptiste Herbin Quartet
Royal Academy of Dance, York Road, London SW11

13 Nim Sadot
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

13 Greg Abate Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton

SUNDAY

14 BD Lenz Trio
Seven Arts, 31 Harrogate Road, Leeds

14 Pat McCarthy Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

14 Alex Western-King
Southampton Modern Jazz Club, 74 London Road, Southampton

14 Roda de Samba
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton

14 Joe Farnsworth Band (evening) Greg Abate (lunchtime)
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

14 Linley Hamilton
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

14 Raphael Tate (evening) Rachel Sutton (morning)
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

14 Jamil Sheriff
Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Beaumont Street, Hexham

14 Pete Allen Band
The Donnington Valley Hotel and Spa, Old Oxford Road, Donnington

MONDAY

15 Nathan Lawson Trio
Black Bull, Bridge Street, Blaydon

15 David Ade Kayode
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

15-16 Chief Adjuah (formerly Christian Scott)
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

15 Simon Mulligan
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

16 Anais Reno Quartet
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking

16 Howl Quartet
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

16 Dominic J Marshall
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

16 Five Way Split
The Stage Door, 78 West Marlands Road, Southampton

16 Interphase Quartet
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

16 Alina Bzhezhinska and Tony Kofi Trio
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY

17 Stablefolk
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

17 Empirical
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

17 Marcus Strickland Twi-Life
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

17 Joe Farnsworth Quartet
Swansea Jazz Club, Cu Mumbles, 7 Castleton Walk Arcade, Newton Road, Swansea

17 Ros Lewis
Seven Arts, 31 Harrogate Road, Leeds

THURSDAY

18 Hypnotic Brass Ensemble
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

18-20 Patrice Rushen
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, Soho, London W1

18 Brad Linde's Continentals
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

18 Leo Green
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

18 Nat Steele Quartet
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

18 BJF: Ragamuffins
The Landor Space, Landor Road, London SW11

18 Sharp Little Bones feat Tony Kofi
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

18 Amy Bird
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

18 Becca Wilkins' Reverie
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

FRIDAY

19 BJF: Alex Bryson Trio
National Opera Studio, Chapel Yard, London SW11

19-28 Birmingham Jazz and Blues Festival
Various venues, Birmingham

19 Zoe Gilby Trio
Seventeen Nineteen, Church Street East, Sunderland

19-21 Lincoln Jazz Festival: James Taylor Quartet, Ian Shaw, Antonio Forcione and more
Various venues, Lincoln

19 Anthony Strong
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

19 Biréli Lagrene
Kings' Place, 90 York Way, London N1

19 Luis Verde with Dean Stockdale (evening)
Traveller's Rest, West Auckland Road, Cockerton, Darlington

19 Luis Verde with Dean Stockdale (lunchtime)
Lit & Phil, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne

19 Samara
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY

20 Snake Davis with BoP
Chopwell Community Centre, Derwent Street, Chopwell

20 Jazz Re:Fest
Southbank Centre, London SE1

20 Down to the Bone
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

20 Brandon Allen Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

20 Dave O'Higgins
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

20 The Urban Art Orchestra of Detroit
Live @Union Lane, Brampton, Cumbria

20 The Changyng Same
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Brighton

SUNDAY

21 Ben Crosland Quartet
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

21 Madeleine Peyroux
Barbican, Silk Street, London EC2

21 Mike DeSouza
Southampton Modern Jazz Club, 74 London Road, Southampton

21 Pedro Navarro Duo
Kings' Place, 90 York Way, London N1

21 Natalie Williams Soul Family (evening) Blue Harlem (lunchtime)
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

21 Will Barnes Sextet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

21 BJF: Leon Greening plays Bobby Timmons
National Opera Studio, Chapel Yard, London SW11

21 Imaani
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

21 Caroline Boaden Quintet
Seven Arts, 31 Harrogate Road, Leeds

MONDAY

22-23 Lee Ritenour and Dave Grusin
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

26-27 Emma Rawicz

Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

Saxophonist Emma Rawicz sets in for a weekend at the basement Soho jazz mecca. Following her sold out shows last year, she returns for a three-gig residency which sees her perform alongside renowned jazz pianist Gwilym Simcock, with her fantastic 20-piece jazz orchestra, and in a special one-off show with pianist Elliot Galvin alongside a string quartet. Expect to hear new and captivating arrangements of her originals in these varied formats. Edgy, emotive, both up tempo and slow and affecting – Rawicz is always worth catching live.

Airshots
July 24 Radio

BBC RADIO 2 88-91 FM and DAB
Jamie Cullum show (Tues, 9pm)

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM and DAB
'Round Midnight (Mon-Fri 11.30pm)
Jazz Record Requests (Sun, 4pm)

BBC RADIO 6 MUSIC DAB
Gilles Peterson, Sat 3pm

JAZZ FM DAB, Sky, Alexa, smartphone, tablet and online at jazzfm.com
(Mon – Fri) 6am-6.30am Business Breakfast, 6.30am-10am Jazz FM Breakfast with Nigel Williams, 10am-2pm Midmornings with Danielle Perry, 2pm-6pm Afternoon drive with Simon Philips, 6pm-7pm Jazz FM's Greatest with Mark Walker, 7pm-9pm Dinner Jazz with Mark Walker. (Mon) 9pm-10pm The Performance Series with Ruth Fisher, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Tues) 9pm-10pm Jazz Travels with Sarah Ward, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Weds) . 9pm-10pm The Big Easy with Lil' Koko. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Thurs) 9pm-10pm True Brit with Helen Mayhew. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Fri) 9pm-10pm The Ronnie Scott's Radio Show with Ian Shaw. 10pm-1am Late Night Jazz with Helen Mayhew. (Sat) 6am-9am The Weekend Breakfast with Nia Visser, 9am-10am Jazz Shapers with Elliot Moss, 10am-2pm Nigel Williams Saturday Show, 2pm-6pm YolanDa Brown on Saturday, 6pm-9pm The Sarah Ward Collection, 9pm-10pm Jazz FM Voices, 10pm-1am The Blueprint with Chris Philips. (Sun) 6am-10am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 10am-1pm Tony Minvielle, 1-3pm Robbie Vincent, 3pm-5pm Sunday Afternoons with John Osborne, 5-7pm Blues and Boogie with David Freeman, 7pm-9pm Clare Teal Big Band Jazz; 9pm Sunday Discovery and 10pm-1am Somethin' Else with Jez Nelson, Ruth Fisher's Full Circle 1-3am.

ONLINE AND PODCASTS
OneJazz - online at www.onejazz.net
www.soulandjazz.com – Mike Chadwick bi-weekly show; Tony Minvielle, first and third Wednesdays each month;
Jazz Haven with Robert Howe (8-10pm Mondays) www.avondaleradio.com/schedule/#monday
Jazz On The Beach with Adam Sieff, every Wednesday from 10.00pm - 12.00 midnight on DealRadio.co.uk; the 606 Club Straight Ahead Show with Dave Lewis, every Wednesday at 10pm.
Richard Heath's Alt 2 Show www.radio.lsu.co.uk (9-11pm Thurs);
www.mykindamusic24.com – the Jazz Cavern, Thur 9pm
Dave Self's Sounds of Jazz (4-5pm Tues) www.tunein.com/radio/Blast-1386-s6837/
www.jazzlondonradio.com
www.cosmicjazz.co.uk with Derek Merrill
www.careradio.org - Alan Steadman's Jazz Waves Sun 11pm and repeated.

REGIONAL RADIO ENGLAND
World Beats, Kane 103.7 FM www.kanefm.com (Thurs, 11am); The Jazz Show, 99.2 Hermitage FM with Peter Varden (Weds, 6pm) on 99.2 FM in north west Leicestershire area and online at www.hermitagefm.com; Jazz Kaleidoscope with Alan Musson on 102.5FM in the Southern Black Country and online at www.thebridgeradio.net (Mon, 9pm); Slipstreem Worldwide Beats, RadioReverb 97.2 FM in Brighton and radioreverb.com (11am Sunday); Late Night Jazz with Colin Dickenson, Witney Radio 99.9-107.9 FM (Thurs, 10pm)

WALES Radio Cardiff 98.7 FM, Humie Webbe's Jazz Train (Sun, 10am) and Late Night Jazz (Thurs 10-11pm) on www.witney.radio.

NORTHERN IRELAND BBC Radio Ulster 92-95 FM Walter Love (Sun, 7pm)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND RTÉ John Kelly's Mystery Train, RTE Lyric FM (Sun-Thurs, 7-9pm); Brian Priestley's That's Jazz, Radio Kerry (Weds, 9-10pm and podcast).

ISLE OF MAN
Sweet & Swing and Jumpin' In with H and Chris Caine (Fridays, 9pm) www.manxradio.com, AM 1368, FM 89, 89.5, 97.2, 103.7, DAB +

26 Tristan Banks Quartet
World Heart Beat Embassy Gardens, 3 Ponton Road, London SW11
Jazz, Latin and fusion drummer/percussionist Tristan Banks heads up his fine quartet of Paul Booth, Ross Stanley and Davide Mantovani. Last year, Banks released his debut *View From Above* (Ubuntu Music), drawing on over three decades' worth of experience as a sideman for some incredible musicians (including Roy Ayers, Beverley Knight, Guy Barker and Mike Lindup). The album is a slick, high-energy set unifying his long-standing career and influences. Expect to hear highly skilled and virtuosic originals, delivered with percussive flair.

22 Five-Way Split
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

22 No Big Deal
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

23 Greg Abate and Steve Fishwick Quintet
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking

23 Vertigo
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

23 Julian Costello and Vertigo
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

23 Luca and Sandro Trio
Newcastle House Hotel, Front Street, Rothbury

23 Huw Warren Quartet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY

24 Theo Travis Double Talk
Fleece Jazz, Stoke-by-Nayland Hotel, Colchester

24-25 Natalie Williams Soul Family present: A Philly Soul Summer Festival
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

24 Jay Rayner Sextet
Pizza Express Live, 99 Holborn, London WC1

24 Xhosa Cole
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

24 Ronnie Scott's All Stars
Fire Station, High Street West, Sunderland

24 Fiesta Resistance
Swansea Jazz Club, Cu Mumbles, 7 Castleton Walk Arcade, Newton Road, Swansea

THURSDAY

25 Butcher's Brew
Music Spoken Here at The Marrs Bar, 12 Pierpoint Street, Worcester

25-26 Claire Martin with Rob Barron
The Pheasantry, 152/154 Kins Road, London SW3

25 Lana Shelley Trio
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

25 Tomorrow's New Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

25 Julian Woods, Steve Beresford, Tom Challenger, Caius Williams and Theo Guttenplan
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

25 Ese & The Vooduu People
The Troubadour, 265-267 Old Brompton Road, London SW5

FRIDAY

26-27 The Headhunters
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

26 Dave Lewis
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

26 Jive Aces
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

SATURDAY

27 Swing Cats
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

27 Mississippi Dreamboats
Prohibition Bar, Pink Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne

27 John Cervantes
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY

28 Me and Mr Jones Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

28 Rod Oughton
Southampton Modern Jazz Club, 74 London Road, Southampton

28 Nina Ferro
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

28 Basil Hodge Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

28 Little Big Band
Seven Arts, 31 Harrogate Road, Leeds

MONDAY

29 Mike Redfern Group
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

29 Ed Bentley
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

30 Sam Dunn
Cadogan Hall, 5 Sloane Terrace, London SW1

30 Jonny Ford Jazz Orchestra
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

30 Mike Soper Quartet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

WEDNESDAY

31 Phillip Dornbusch Quartet
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

31 Siglo Section Band
Swansea Jazz Club, Cu Mumbles, 7 Castleton Walk Arcade, Newton Road, Swansea

31 Ana Gracey
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

Claire Martin, The Pheasantry, 25-26 July

jazzwise
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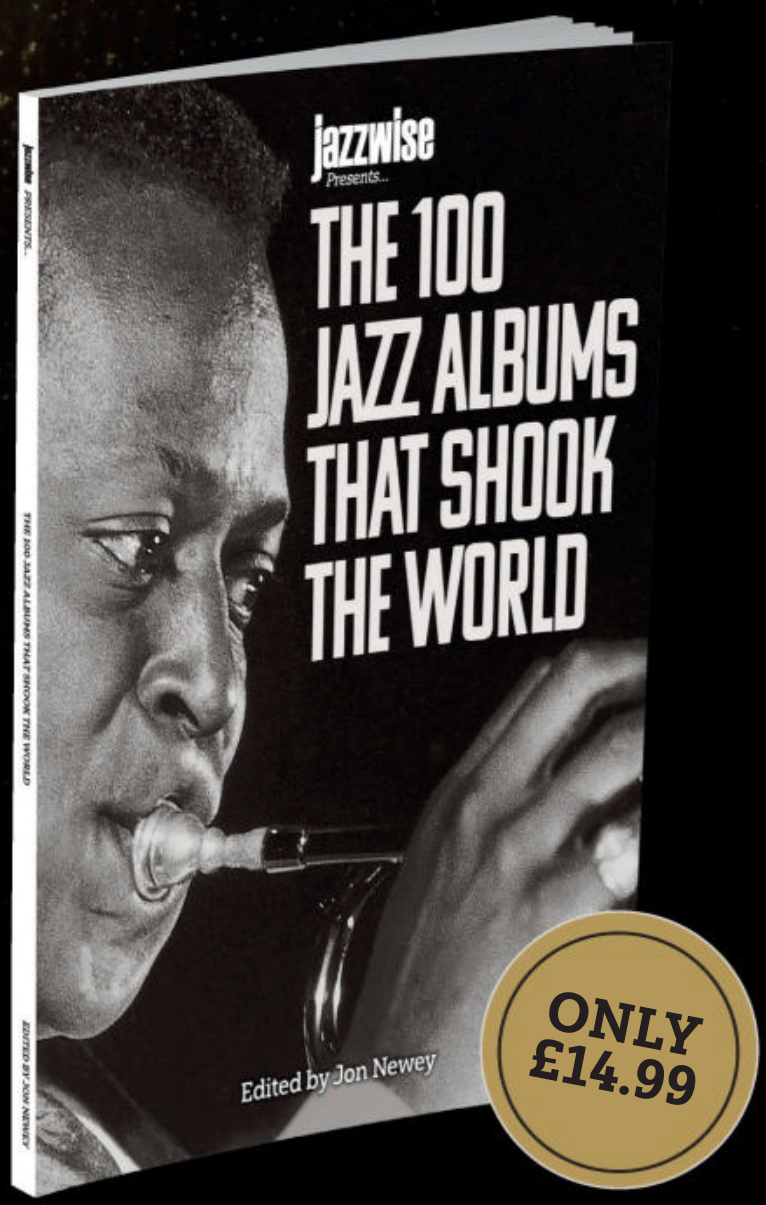

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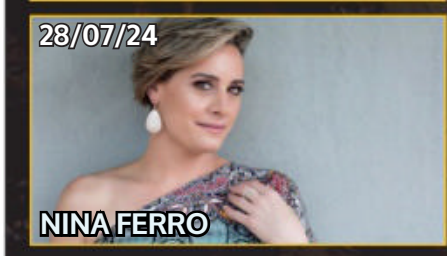

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Letters

Write in to us here at Letters Dept, Jazzwise Magazine, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or email letters@jazzwise.com

Is jazz being used to 'culturewash'?

I was dismayed to read that UK jazz musicians (among them YolanDa Brown and Kokoroko) had been involved with the first Riyadh International Jazz Festival – an event described in some of the more questioning sections of the media as possible 'artwashing' on behalf of Saudi Arabia.

The music we love was created by men and women to articulate their defiance of oppression and produce both awareness of their struggle and an almost infinite capacity for various kinds of beauty from instruments and the human voice.

Since the brutal murder of the journalist and dissident Jamal Khashoggi; and the innumerable oppressive actions against Saudi citizens (especially women and the gay community), there has been a concerted effort by that regime to whitewash its reputation by pouring vast quantities of money into sports and cultural events – during which international participants are expected to keep silent about human rights' issues. (Otherwise known as 'stuffing their mouths with gold"...)

Yes, I realise that there are numerous regimes around our troubled world that should be similarly boycotted, but the equation that obscene amounts of money can overwhelm basic human rights seems to be especially egregious in the case of Saudi Arabia.

What is just as galling about this event is that the UK delegation was led by our government which has ferociously cut spending on the arts and culture over the past 14 years. To add insult to injury, in this respect, they also facilitated the ongoing disaster that is Brexit – which imposes travel, visa and insurance restrictions and obstacles on both UK and international musicians!

Is it too much to ask that jazz musicians and their life-affirming music should be wary of possibly being used for morally questionable projects or am I being naïve to the 'realpolitik' of trying to earn a living in jazz?

Tony Hughes, Warwick via email

Music Bar Cave Shibuya in Tokyo

Mouldy fig warning...

So – contemporary jazz as an undifferentiated mass of mediocrity, getting ever worse (Phillip A White, Letters, *Jazzwise* 293); and swamped by too many highly-trained musicians having the opportunity to make records (Mike Flynn's reply)?

Alternative hypothesis: the fact that relatively few critics agreed that Joshua Redman's *where are we* was the best thing from last year is a sign of: (a) the huge diversity of wonderful music currently being produced in different jazz traditions and genres, that's hard to compare on the basis of anything other than personal taste; and (b) the refreshingly diverse tastes of those critics, with each of them offering a different take on jazz rather than everyone reflecting a narrow consensus.

I do understand the yearning for a simpler world roamed by musical giants, and the sense that the uncertain present is always inferior to the familiar past. But, as an historian, I would say that these are the stories we choose to tell, not an objective reality – and, at the time, most of these now-uncontested geniuses who have supposedly recorded 99 per cent of all the jazz that is ever going to matter were derided or condemned by those who likewise saw the music of the past as innately superior to anything their present could produce.

Don't make me tap the 'Beware of Mouldy Figs' sign...

Neville Morley, Castle Cary, Somerset

Don't look back

I feel I need to respond to Philip A White's letter (*Jazzwise* 293) regarding 'Is Jazz all over?'

His statement suggests that within his obviously narrow sphere of 'contemporary jazz', all that has gone before us is now finished, dead, the end! Let's not endeavour to find another nugget of magical music dust.

I wish I could convince myself that there is no longer the need to either listen to, or even find, new (or just missed) music and artists... if we all took his point of view, o my god, think of the many gems of music we/he would not even be bothered to contemplate!

Sorry Mr White, you've got it wrong. Please don't get stuck, thinking the best is behind us. The best is yet to come... you just haven't found or heard it yet. Keep on trucking all. **Ash, Winchester via email**

Curious instruments...

Reading your reviews, I frequently come across listings for instruments which I (and, I suspect, many other readers) have never heard of. Recent examples are glass harmonica, duduk and tarogoto. How about a feature on some of these instruments – what do they look and sound like, where do they come from, who plays them and why?

I look forward to having my horizons broadened.

John Byrne, St Erth, Cornwall

Editor's reply: *That's actually a really good idea John. I'm sure we can help. Leave it with us!*

Wider horizons

I really enjoy your Brilliant Corners pieces, but I think they would be even better if you travelled further afield. There are plenty of great venues outside of the UK, and I'm sure many *Jazzwise* readers would appreciate recommendations for jazzy places to visit when they're travelling or on holiday.

Here are three venues I've come across recently: Jazzland (in Vienna's city centre, good acoustics, friendly staff, fabulous food, €20 entrance fee); Storyville (a great bar, restaurant and jazz venue in Helsinki – on the long Finnish summer nights, they sometimes have acoustic groups playing outside, creating a real street party vibe); and Venice Jazz Club in the Dorsoduro district of that great Italian city, where the emphasis is on music and (very) fine wine!

Also, reading Kevin Whitlock's review of the *Tokyo Jazz Joints* book (*Jazzwise* 292) reminded me of a place we visited last year, Music Bar Cave Shibuya in Tokyo, not far from the famous Shibuya road crossing and the giant Tower Records store. It's a bar and listening joint and they use vintage Macintosh amps, huge old Tannoy speakers and *two* Linn Sondek LP12 turntables. The sound is incredible, the cocktails to die for – and the selection of jazz (and other music) LPs, many of them original first pressings, they have is amazing! Well worth a visit if you're ever in Tokyo!

Do other readers have their own suggestions?

Pete Elliott, Deal via email

Editor's reply: *Fear not Pete, we're celebrating leading NYC club Smoke's 25th anniversary next month and have featured many venues across Europe and US, and this month we visit Ireland...*

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Sarah Vaughan - Sarah +2
An extraordinary voice that few vocalists might ever have the good luck to possess. With a four octave range, coupled perfect pitch and control, she could bend notes as she wished, as well as swoop and scat; a formidable jazz singer.

Ann Peebles- I Can't Stand The Rain
Wonderful 1974 album, originally released on the Memphis-based Hi Records label that deserved a wider audience. It played to Ann Peebles' great strength, her poised and sultry voice.

The Modern Jazz Quartet - The Sheriff
There are four originals by pianist John Lewis, including the fleeting, bluesy title cut, and the moody, spacious "In a Crowd" -- originally composed for the 1961 film A Milanese Story

Count Basie - Basie At Birdland
Birdland, the self-proclaimed, 'Jazz Corner of the World' provides a raucous, lively backdrop to the band's soulful Kansas City style Jazz alongside their harder hitting, big band bop.

Sonny Rollins & Colman Hawkins - Sonny Meets Hawk!
This recording is extraordinary in every sense, and not merely in that it marks the first time that these great musicians have played together.

Stacey Kent - The Changing Lights
This latest recording again demonstrates her vocal mastery. The immaculate intonation, timing and diction are flawless to the point of sheer purity.

Chet Baker & Crew
The crew on these sides includes Phil Urso (tenor sax), Bobby Timmons (piano), Jimmy Bond (bass), Peter Littman (drums), and of course Baker (trumpet/vocals).

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